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Writing, sociality, and identity in kindergarten : an ethnographic study.

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WRITING, SOCIALITY, AND IDENTITY IN KINDERGARTEN:

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

A Dissertation Presented

by

MARGARET YATSEVITCH PHINNEY

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This work is dedicated to my friend, Jan Szymaszek, and to educators everywhere who wonder what schooling means to children.

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ABSTRACT

WRITING, SOCIALITY, AND IDENTITY IN KINDERGARTEN:

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This dissertation reports a study of the social interactions of kindergarten children as they engaged in peer writing activities during free choice periods. The theoretical proposition framing the study is that children may use writing in peer groups to advance their social agendas. These agendas may or may not be those of the teacher or the school.

The purposes of the study were: a) to investigate the nature of students' agendas with respect to both their writing and their social relationships, and b) to analyze the ways in which writing in this single classroom was connected to children's social and personal identities.

Over a full school year, sixty-five hours of videotape were collected with a primary focus on writing activities. Microanalysis of students' discourse processes, using systematic discourse analysis and conversational coding techniques, provided the primary data that supported the findings. A focused study was carried out of the story-construction patterns of one group of girls. These girls created stories in which the characters were fictionalizations of themselves and each other. Through their peer

interactions in the process of constructing the stories, the girls negotiated their real-life roles and positions of status, their ownership of both their writing and their personas, and their relationships with each other. Both their writing and their social relationships were transformed in the process.

Current practice in teaching elementary writing, based on educators' agendas, supports social interaction as a medium for improved cognition and higher quality written products. The results of this study show that when writing in peer groups is viewed from the students' point of view, some children use school writing to serve their needs for both affiliation and individual agency by negotiating identity issues within the writing process. Such findings contradict the theory that young children are essentially egocentric, suggesting rather that their social competence is as developed when they enter school as their communicative competence. To be complete, a theory of school writing must take into consideration the students' agendas as well as those of educators.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND FOCUS OF THE STUDY

A. Overview and Background

This is an ethnographic study of the relationship between kindergarten children's engagement in writing activities and their social interactions, when they are unconstrained by the immediate influence of the teacher. Using microanalysis of children's conversation while they were engaged in writing activities, and data from interviews and fieldnotes, I examined early writing from the children's point of view in an effort to understand their social agendas as they write in their classrooms.

Research on writing has generally taken the educator's point of view. That is, studies often focus on acquiring knowledge about pedagogical strategies which result in an improved final product. Such strategies include teacher-student instructional or feedback techniques (individual conferences, marginal vs end comments, revision techniques, topic choice, teaching brainstorming, revision, editing, etc.), the structuring of student-student tutoring or feedback strategies (editor-of-the-day, peer conferences, author's circle, etc.), and managing the classroom environment for quality use of the teacher's time (using students for less important aspects, scheduling, grouping, etc.). The agenda being supported is the academic one of the teacher (and the school). Insights coming from such research have been helpful in adding to our understanding of the developmental and contextual influences on the writing process. They have helped teachers improve their classroom management strategies and their instructional procedures in order to increase both the quantity and quality of school writing.

However, other research has shown that what is taught is not necessarily what is learned: what children do in classrooms can be an external show that masks what seem to be more important learning agendas for the children (Bloome, Puro, & Theodourou, 1989; Corno, 1989; Davies, 1982). In addition to satisfying their curiosity about their material world, children's school agendas include the important work of building and maintaining social relationships among themselves. Moffett (1983 [1968]) suggests that social interaction is the most important factor in student academic engagement: "Ultimately a student ... is more interested in his relation to other people than he is in a subject, because psychic survival and fulfillment depend on what kind of relation one works out with the social world" (p. 119). For this reason it is important to look at social interaction and engagement in school writing *from the child's point of view* if we are to fully understand how children come to see themselves as writers. To understand classroom writing and guide further research, a theoretical construct of classroom social interaction from the students' perspective needs to be formulated. A model for viewing academic learning from a student's a perspective, compared to the traditional model from the educator's perspective, will be presented in Chapter II.

A number of researchers have looked at young children's social interactions as they write in classrooms and have identified strategies children use to manage their relationships with respect to the task (Cooper, Marquis, & Ayers-Lopez, 1982; Dickinson, 1986; Gere & Abbott, 1985; Healy, 1981; Heap, 1989; Wilkinson, & Calculator, 1982). However, such studies view social interaction as an influence upon the writing rather than as a means for children to transform the task to fulfill their own social needs. One set of studies addressing children's own social agendas as they write has been

conducted by Dyson (1989). In studying primary children's conversational exchanges while they were writing, Dyson (1989) has noted aspects of the children's agendas that are embedded in the activity. She found that young children's social worlds are intertwined with their writing activities, that "print is meaningful within the context of the activity—the talk and action—of which it is a part" (p. 255).

One way to move beyond a generalized description of social interaction and writing engagement is by attending closely to the relationship between language and social interaction. Language, here, refers not only to written language, but the talk and non-verbal signals that go on during classroom writing activities. Language and social interaction affect each other (Hymes, 1985 [1974]). When children write in school, unlike the image of the solitary author in 'a room of her own,' they are writing in a social context, surrounded by the sights, sounds, and influences of others who are similarly engaged. They must not only engage in the academic activities of writing, but they must signal to the teacher that they are fulfilling her agenda while simultaneously signaling their peers that they are connected to—or at least aware of—the peer-group's social agenda (Bloome, Puro, & Theodourou, 1989; Corno, 1989).* Because of the influence of researchers and educators such as Graves (1983), Calkins (1986), Hansen (1987), and Newkirk and Atwell (1982), children are more frequently being allowed to talk as they write. Given the sociality of language, an ongoing discourse among peers while writing adds a significant additional layer of complexity to the social nature of writing in classrooms.

B. Focus of the Study

Looking at writing from the perspective of the child raises a different set of questions than might be raised from an educator's viewpoint. Two such questions relate to (a) *students' relationships with each other* and (b) *students' social identities*, both with respect to writing. Within these two areas, the research questions for this dissertation arise.

With respect to (a) *students' relationships with each other*, the question is:

> What is the relationship between involvement in writing activities and social interaction among students?

Engagement in writing in this study does not mean writing development, but rather moment-by-moment participation in activities defined in the classroom as writing. Social interactions include both verbal and non-verbal exchanges between two or more students. Social interaction includes social functions, which here might involve: building, regulating, and maintaining social relationships, roles, and status in the group; maintaining contact with each other; accomplishing a collaborative effort; sharing resources, etc. The relationship between writing activities and social interactions refers to the ways writing and social relationships are transformed as the social events during writing engagement unfold.

The second area of study is that of *students' social identities* with respect to classroom writing. Identity is a two-sided aspect of human sociality (Burke, 1969 [1950]; Dyson, 1987b; Solsken, forthcoming; Tannen, 1991 [1986]): it involves having a sense of both 'separateness' and 'connectedness'—a sense of competence as an individual, separate from—but in relation to—the

group, and a sense of being an accepted and participating member of the group—being 'one,' or 'consubstantial' with the group (Burke, 1969 [1950]).

Children have a positive affinity for activities that give them confidence in their own ability to engage in and be competent with those activities, while at the same time helping them feel that such engagement makes them a part of a desirable (for them) social group. With respect to literacy development, researchers, educators and educational psychologists agree that building an identity begins early (Bettleheim, 1977; Clay, 1987; Doake, 1981; Holdaway, 1979; Jewell & Zintz, 1986; Meek, 1982; Teale, 1978). Young children want to engage in the activities of the people they admire, particularly their parents. If reading and writing are practiced and valued in the home, particularly by their same-gendered parent (Solsken, forthcoming), children are more likely to want to develop competence in literacy-related activities. In school settings, young children who see themselves as competent writers and as members of the 'writing community' include engagement in writing as part of their personal and social identities (Phinney, 1991). If we are to help children see writing engagement as an activity that will give them an identity in a group with which they want to be associated, it is particularly important that we come to understand how children's sense of identity with respect to writing is formed and affected in school settings. The question is:

> How do children writing together in a school setting establish with each other their sense of separateness as distinct and capable individuals and their sense of connectedness as members within the writing community in which they are working?

Children's separateness with respect to writing may be characterized by statements or signals that set them apart from others, such as assertions of individual competence with respect to a perceived norm; assertion of a position of authority with respect to an issue; assertion of ownership over their writing; or ignoring or rejecting suggestions for their texts; etc. To this list, Dyson (1989) adds defying convention, associating with someone else's specialness (which can also be seen as connectedness), as well as competence and ownership. It should be noted that although such separateness allows the individual to stand out as distinct, it is always a distinctness *in relation to the community of writers.*

Connectedness may be characterized by statements or signals that indicate the children's sameness with—or support of—others, or desire to be associated with perceived norms. Such signals might include agreement or affiliation with another's assessment or assertion; offering of or accepting suggestions; complimenting another's choice; supporting a perceived cultural norm with respect to writing; responding to others; requesting help; etc. *How* the children achieve a balance between separateness and connectedness can be studied through microanalysis of conversations that take place while they are writing. Such analysis would find the patterns of relationship between their writing engagement, talk about writing, and the indicators of separateness and connectedness suggested above.

To explore the answers to these questions I collected and analyzed videotapes of kindergartners who selected writing activities during the daily "Activity Period." The tapes were collected approximately weekly over a full school year. I used type case analysis (as described in Green & Bloome, 1983) and conversational mapping (Green & Wallat, 1981) to focus closely on the children's interactions during writing activities in order to determine the

children's social agendas as they wrote. I examined closely the relationship between sociality and writing that Dyson has observed more generally. I identified some of the specific strategies some children used to negotiate their roles and status with respect to writing—what Dyson (1989) has identified as "the social forces that energize writing growth" (p. 3), and I showed some of the ways, moment-by-moment, some children used the writing activity to balance their sense of social and personal identity—what Dyson calls, "being special" and "being with one's friends" (pp. 63-66).

C. Significance of the Study

From a theoretical viewpoint the significance of this study is to contribute to an understanding of writing from the child's point of view. First, research shows that there is often a distinction between what is taught and what is learned in schools (Davies, 1982). We need to attend foremost to what is learned, or our teaching may not be achieving what we think it is. To attend to what is learned, we need to understand engagement in school activities from the learner's point of view. If, as Moffett suggested (1983 [1969]), students' first agenda is social interaction, we must find out how that agenda affects and is affected by the tasks in which we ask children to engage.

Secondly, with respect to writing, we need to understand what it means to write *as a child*; we cannot assume child-authors are merely inexperienced adult authors. The process of writing for them may be quite different than for adults, particularly when consideration is given to the purposes and contexts in which most child writing is done compared to purposes and settings for much adult writing. Currently, there is no theory of what it means to be a child writer in school and we cannot assess and instruct well unless we have such a theory. This study contributes some insights into what it means to be a

child writer as a preliminary step in developing a theory of writing engagement from the child's point of view.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I review research and theory applying to three areas: 1) engagement in school activities from the child's viewpoint; 2) children's social interactions while engaged in writing activities; and 3) the relationship between children's social identity and engagement in writing activities. The first section is a conceptual description of scholarship, since there are few research studies that target the topic. It will provide a theoretical framework for the study. In the second section, I categorize specific studies that look at literacy engagement and social interaction. These studies provide insights into the ways peer group interactions affect literacy learning from an educator's viewpoint. The third section defines identity and briefly discusses the work of one researcher who has begun to address the area of identity and writing engagement. This section provides a perspective on identity as a factor in writing engagement as background for the findings in the study related to children's need for both affiliation and independence.

A. School Activities from the Child's Viewpoint

"The outcomes of an individual's literacy learning are shaped by the social contexts in which they are embedded and can only be fully understood in relation to these social contexts" (Langer, 1987, p. 6).

If part of the job of teaching is to help individuals find their voices in society, particularly disenfranchised and marginalized individuals, then who they are, who they become in classroom contexts, what they add into the group through their actions and from their unique perspectives, and what they take out must be considered as we work to understand literacy learning

in schools. Peer interaction is an important piece of classroom interaction, increasingly so as we move toward more child-responsive, integrated, and workshop-oriented classrooms. One problem with most models of peer interaction is that they focus on academic goals without accounting for the social goals of the learners within their own social and historical settings. Theories, discussions, and justifications of peer interaction in classroom settings have been based on the assumption that peer interaction is a teaching tool or methodology for increasing academic achievement, enhancing cognition, and, to facilitate its use, for teaching social skills. In the following sections I first examine a sociocognitive view of learning as it is currently defined and practiced in schools. I discuss the gaps in this view and then discuss research and scholarship that leads to a broader perspective which recognizes the importance of the social goals of the students and the social history of the classroom community in the literacy learning process.

1. A Sociocognitive Model

a. Background of Peer Interaction

Peer interaction has been viewed from a variety of angles and under a number of labels. A brief discussion of definitions and views will be helpful in providing the background for interpreting the model I suggest in this section.

Terms like peer tutoring, peer response groups, and collaborative learning surface frequently in the academic and applied literature. For example, in their review and discussion of peer tutoring, a specifically defined form of peer interaction, Goodlad and Hirst (1989) note that there have been over a thousand articles published in the literature in the last decade alone, evidence that interest in using peer tutoring as a teaching device is

widespread. Nor is the concept a new one. In the same review, Goodlad and Hirst trace the practice of peer tutoring back to the late 18th century. It has long been a popular means of improving school-produced products associated with literacy and other academic learning and with literate thinking. And peer tutoring is currently a standard part of school management in at least one country, New Zealand. According to Craig (1990), a Deputy Minister in the New Zealand Ministry of Education, structured, training-based peer tutoring is an established and successful aspect of standard schooling methodology in that country, where class sizes are large and support services are limited.

Specific definitions of peer interaction vary according to the aspect emphasized. Goodlad and Hirst define *peer tutoring*:

> ... 'peer' being defined as someone belonging to the same group in society when membership is defined by status. In this case, the status is that of not being a professional. In every case of peer tutoring, a professional teacher organizes the activity of the non-professionals (*tutors*) as they minister to the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries of the process (*tutees*). (pp. 13-14)

Bruffee (1984) similarly defines *collaborative learning*, which includes peer tutoring, peer criticism, and classroom group work, as "a form of indirect teaching in which the teacher sets the problem and organizes students to work it out collaboratively" (p. 637). Golub (1988), using Bruffee's definition, adds an emphasis on talk: "Collaborative learning has as its main feature a structure that allows for student talk...," backing up his statement with a quote from Britton that "the relationship of talk to writing is central to the writing process" (p. 1). Golub also stresses the importance of thorough training in developing "group skills" to "ensure that [the students] can work productively and harmoniously in pairs and in small groups" (p. 2). Ann

Shea Bayer's definition of *collaborative-apprenticeship learning*, grounded in Vygotskian theory and Bruner's concept of scaffolding, also stresses the role of the teacher or the more experienced or capable peer in promoting academic and cognitive learning (Bayer, 1990). Hill and Hill (1990) emphasize the word co-operation in defining *co-operative learning*:

> Co-operative learning is not about harmonising. It often involves intellectual conflict. A co-operative activity can be said to exist when two or more people are working together towards the same goal. *The two essential elements in any co-operative activity are goal similarity and positive interdependence* [italics theirs] (p. 7).

Goal similarity means having a *common* goal, even if individual motivation for involvement differs. Positive interdependence is "the view held by group members that they can only succeed if they work together" (p. 8). This involves taking on jobs, or roles, that are part of the larger task.

b. Current Views of Peer Interaction: A Summary Model

Regardless of the labels or emphases, the primary purpose of the studies and applications of peer interaction is to improve and extend academic achievement and cognitive skill. Social skills and self confidence are often mentioned, and in one case (Hill & Hill, 1990) they are given equal status, but they are usually treated as means-to-ends or by-products of peer interaction rather than as important educational goals in themselves. Peer interaction tends to be treated as a pedagogical approach or method. The teacher assigns a task to be performed by a group of students, often specifies the type of feedback or aid to be given, and, explicitly or implicitly, sets or implies the rules for interacting. The purpose of the structure is to produce a final product that conforms to the teacher's academic agenda and to enhance

thinking and interaction skills that can be used in future academic exercises. Figure 2.1 provides a 'lens' through which this structure might be visualized.

The model assumes that students are passive agents and empty receptacles who can be directed to take ownership of the teacher's task, structure, and rules. They can collaboratively process the 'grist' and mill out a result in keeping with the educational goals of the teacher, the school, and, implicitly, the dominant culture of their community. It assumes that the dynamics of the group interaction can be orchestrated according to an external plan and that the students' agendas are insignificant variables in the production of the final product. The arrows, in the Figure 1 model, show the uni-directional flow of teaching and learning: the teacher's tasks and purposes are not seen as being influenced by the outcomes or the processes by which those outcomes are achieved.

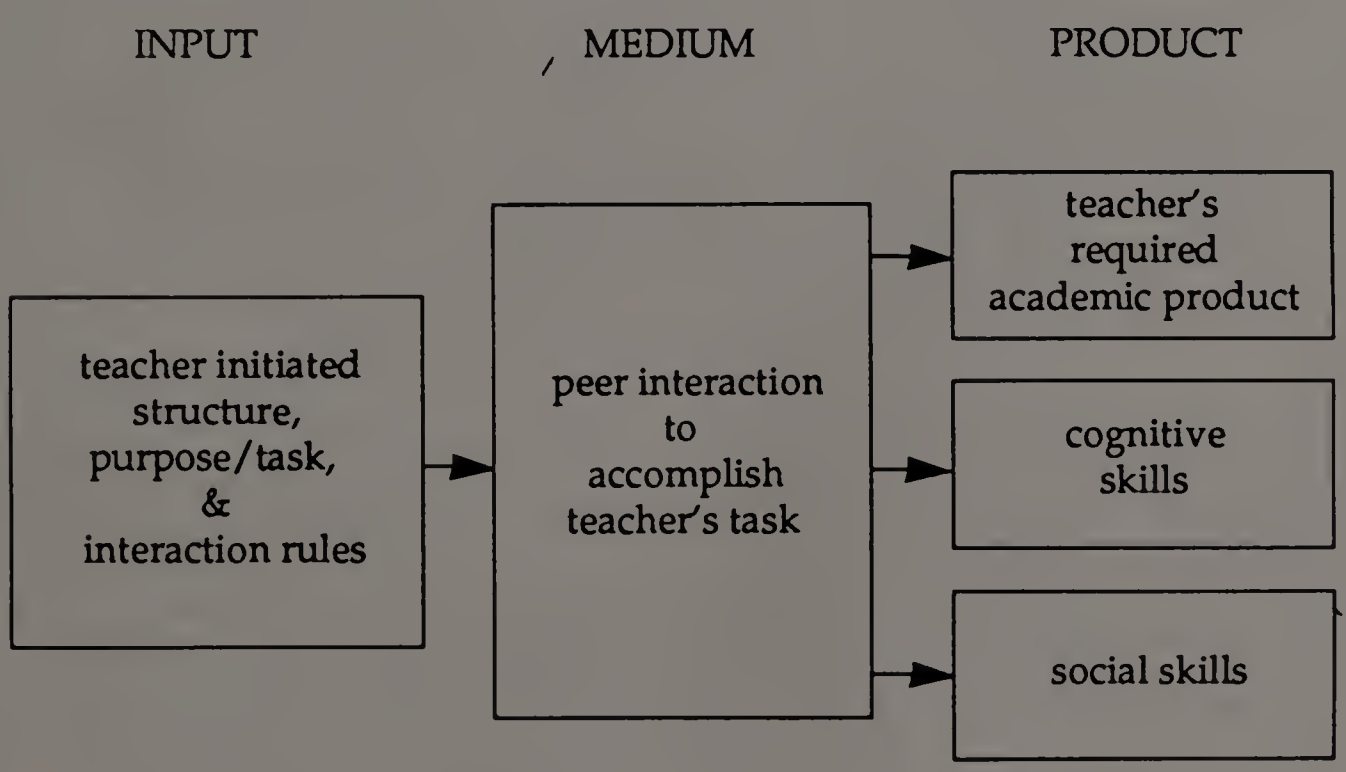

Figure 2.1: Model of Current View of Peer Interaction in Classrooms

By ignoring the students' agendas, the model does not recognize the nature or influence of the peer interactions that take place outside the presence or direct influence of the teacher—the spontaneous, social interactions in which the teacher's agendas are embedded. Group interaction in this model is seen as a medium for acquiring academic knowledge and developing intellectual skills that can be used independently and transferred to new situations. The group's purpose, as Moffett (1983 [1968]) points out, is to "collaboratively forge serviceable abstractions and thus enable each member to do so alone" (p. 93).

In spite of acknowledging the value to learning of social interaction, the model remains based on what Hood, McDermott, and Cole (1980) refer to as "a psychology of individuals" (p. 156). Such a theory assumes that intellectual processes used in collaborative settings will be internalized by the individual and subsequently usable outside the event in which they were employed. Such a model also underestimates or ignores the significance of other 'products' that may result from the group intercourse, outcomes such as the establishment of group- and event-specific ways of interacting, and the establishment, maintenance, or adjustment of individuals' roles and status within the group.

2. A Dynamic Model

School boards, parents, and principals expect that teachers in schools will impose organization, direction, a required curriculum, and other constraints on their students. They are hired to transmit the knowledge and skills of the culture and are held responsible for doing so. But in spite of students' subordinate positions, and as noted earlier, there is research evidence (see Phinney, 1991 for review) that students have their own social

and academic agendas, both individually and collectively. These agendas influence the nature of students' engagement in school activities, including what they learn and how they learn it. If we are to value the significance of the social influences of student interaction, we will need a more complex model than Figure 1 illustrates. We will need to attend to the nature of the interactions that the teacher *cannot* orchestrate by virtue of her inability to be omniscient, omnipotent, and ubiquitous. A clearer picture will emerge if the model takes into account the dynamics of the interaction itself, the nature and importance of the students' agendas, and the additional products that come out of the interaction.

Three ways people have talked about social interactions in classrooms in the recent literature do take into account the effects of students' goals and the dynamics of the interaction process on any expected outcomes. The notions of *"procedural display,"*[1] *"classroom literacy,"* and a focus on the *centrality of events* highlight the importance of students' immediate involvement in, and understanding of, the social expectations of the activities and events that take place in classrooms.

The concept identified by Bloome, Puro, and Theodorou (1989) as *"procedural display"* suggests that students and teachers cooperatively enact a school-like display that satisfies perceived expectations for what classroom activity should look like. However, such enactment goes beyond merely 'acting out school.' It may, in fact, mask an implicitly endorsed, or at least tolerated, undercurrent of activity that is unrelated to the visible or stated purposes. The authors use student-student conversation as an example: a teacher may permit a limited undercurrent of conversation to take place in certain study situations when the students should look like they are working silently. Barnes (1976), describing the same phenomenon, summarizes a

similar scenario as, "a strange contradiction between explicit demands and behaviour which pupils and teacher alike covertly accept" (p. 12).

Through procedural display, teachers and students demonstrate their understanding that school is something of a dramatization, a process of 'going through the motions' of school. That is, certain historically established routines must be enacted by people in schools to satisfy the cultural expectations for what schooling ought to be. They also implicitly understand that such expectations do not always serve the purposes of the particular classroom. For example, in some schools, children are expected to ask permission to leave their seats, but a particular activity such as a science or art activity may call for unexpected adjustments in procedures or material needs. If the teacher doesn't want to be interrupted, movement may be implicitly allowed. In order to fulfill those purposes, therefore, certain activities that are not in the standard educational repertoire are permitted, by tacit agreement, to take place.

Barnes, Corno, and Dyson, each in their own way, have suggested that a model of classroom interaction must take into account the effects of students' goals and interactional dynamics on expected outcomes. The idea of procedural display is broadened by what these three scholars have identified as students' need to implicitly understand and learn how to operate in a school setting in order to be successful. Barnes (1976) referred to this knowledge as learning how to "take part in the game," to "play in the 'pupil' position," or, if we are teachers, to play "in the 'teacher' position too" (p. 12). He points out that not only is this "invisible knowledge," but the rules for how to play are constantly changing so that part of playing successfully is being able to adapt to the changes.

Corno (1989) labels this concept "classroom literacy." She carries Barnes' notion further by exploring the requisite knowledge bases students need in order to become classroom literate. She suggests that it is "a process of coming to know *the commonly acknowledged structures and functions of classrooms and of being able to use this knowledge productivity [sic—productively?] in the social and academic roles that classrooms define*" [italics hers] (p. 30). Thus, children who understand the ways classrooms operate academically and socially and who can use that knowledge to operate smoothly in the classroom setting are predicted to be successful in school.

Dyson (1984) labels this process "learning to do school." In studying young children's engagement in writing tasks, she found that children do seek to identify the patterns that underlie writing occasions. She has added the dimension of the influence of home, observing that identifications of the school patterns for writing vary according to the children's home learning backgrounds. Those children whose assumptions about writing approximated the assumptions held by the teacher were able to get at the underlying meaning in the writing activities, while those whose assumptions differed, tended to focus on the surface level of the task.

Such views of classroom interaction suggest that it is the social *events* taking place in classrooms [including academic activities *as* social events] that are at the core of how students learn in schools, as well as of what they learn, more than the methodologies used and the tasks imposed by administrators, teachers, and curriculum guides.

Bloome and Bailey (in press) point out that events occur as interpersonal constructions, formed by the interactions of people in contact with people and with the material world. Meaning is made when people interpret and respond to each others' actions and responses through mutually

constructed systems of communication. One event may create, revise, or refine previously established meanings, so that future events are built on different understandings than the understandings on which previous events were constructed. Thus, people's learning is historical, and the meanings they establish are likewise historical. Bloome and Bailey go so far as to suggest that meaning does not reside in individuals, but only in the events in which the individuals have participated. That is, the individual's intent is refracted, refined, and readjusted by the responses received from the group. And in our model of the classroom writing process as a social construct, Bloome and I suggest a definition of writing as a social process in itself:

> ... writing is defined as a social event embedded in a series of social events, intellectual development is located in the events and not in the individuals, and the agency and actions of people in an event are framed by the realities of the social setting, their histories, and their negotiated futures. (Bloome & Phinney, forthcoming, typescript p. 16)

By "intellectual development is located in the events and not in the individuals," we mean that it is the unfolding social interaction that, moment-by-moment, determines which intellectual skills will be called upon and developed. Again, rather than being driven by individuals' intellectual histories, learning, we suggest, "is driven by the group's social history" (typescript p. 16).

From this perspective, academic tasks become an integral part of social events as they are intertwined with negotiated interactions. Cognitive growth is seen as embedded in, and a by-product of, those social events. For the students, the goal is involvement in the interaction event, and the primary 'products' for them may be more social than academic or cognitive, evidenced by such outcomes as the establishment of group supported interaction rules,

the development or reinforcement of individual identity in terms of roles and status, and the formation, maintenance or readjustment of interpersonal relationships. Moreover, coherency among these classroom social events is provided by the accumulated history of successive events over time.

The implication from the notions of procedural display, classroom literacy, and the centrality of events is that participation in the classroom 'act' demands ongoing, interactive engagement and adaptation. This involves what I will identify as a moment-by-moment *action-oriented response* to both social and cognitive activities. By *action-oriented response* I mean that participants must constantly interpret the social requirements of the moment and re-adjust their responses as the activities and interactions are played out in the group. A visualization of the model that acknowledges the nature of peer interaction as a socio-historical construct, shown in Figure 2.2, provides a different 'lens' through which we might view peer interaction in classrooms.

a. The Input

The left-hand, or Input, side of this model of peer interaction does not neglect to acknowledge the requirements of the teacher and the school, for the effects of such requirements cannot be ignored in any consideration of classroom interaction. But, unlike the model in Figure 1, the Figure 2 model, by using double arrows between the input and activity segments, treats those teacher requirements as dynamic rather than as static, ever-the-same methodological, curriculum, and management structures. Teachers change the difficulty, type, and presentation of tasks to accommodate their perceptions of students' abilities, achievement levels, and behavioral characteristics. The model is both normative and ideal: it recognizes that teachers *are* influenced by children's classroom social interactions, and it

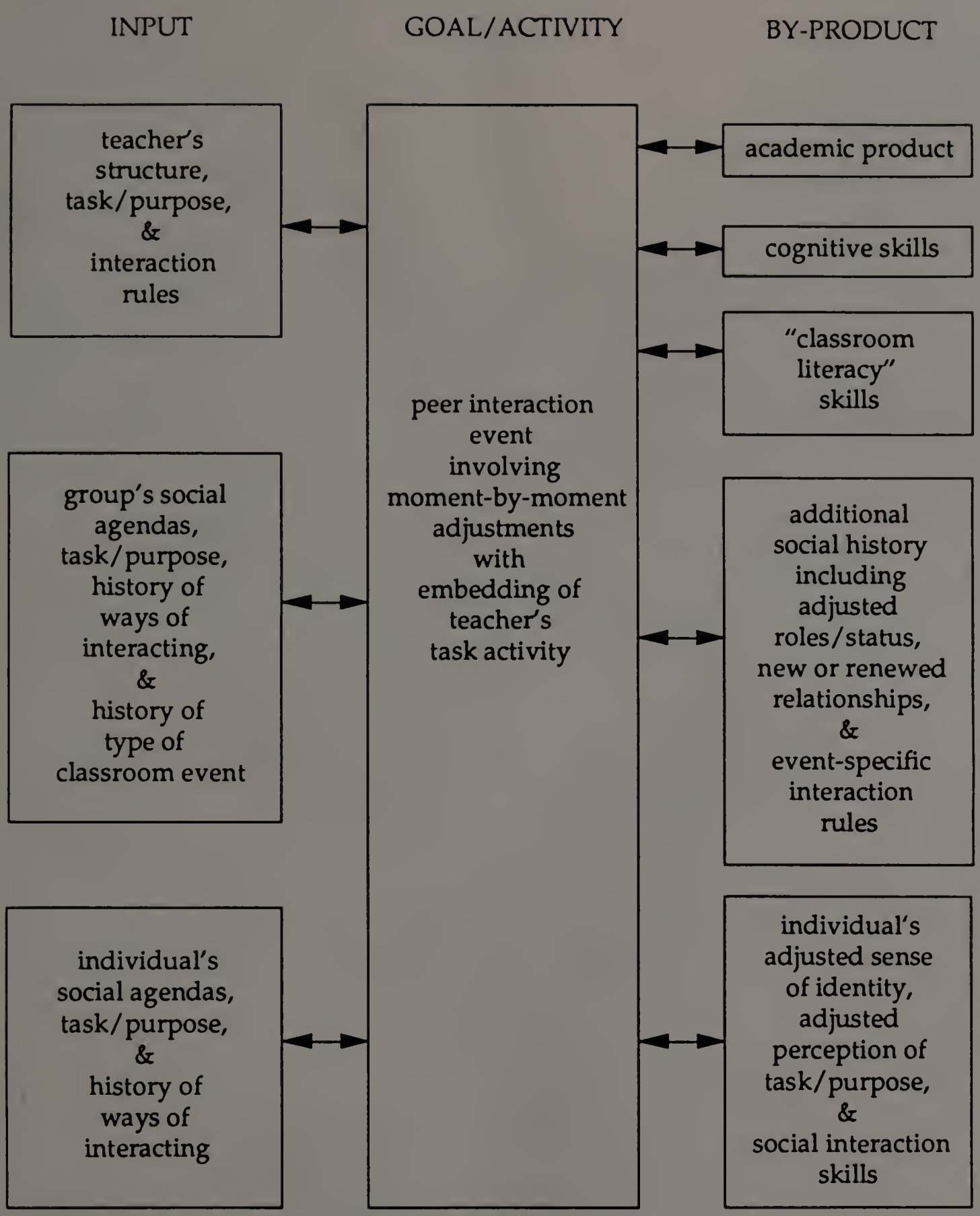

Figure 2.2: A Dynamic Model of Peer Interaction and Individual Agency in Classrooms

promotes such influence as a positive aspect of teacher management and planning.

The significant change in the Figure 2 model is that it gives place to input by the social group and its social agendas, which themselves are in constant adjustment. The notion is sensible that human activity, including language, is social in origin and that knowledge is socially constructed through language. Given recent research on the social context of literacy by such scholars as Bloome (1989), Robinson (1983), Solsken (forthcoming), Street (1984), and Weinstein-Shr (1989), it is no longer sensible, when studying classroom learning, to focus solely on the individual as the primary unit of analysis without considering the social context in which his/her actions are embedded. Thus, the model takes into account the accumulated history of interaction by the group as an influence on the ongoing classroom social event.

But it is important not to ignore completely individual agency as a factor in the social construction of a discourse community and its construction of knowledge. Children are interested in the material world, in exploring and learning because they are personally interested in the materials or the topic. Additionally, they are interested in establishing their personal identity—or sense of separateness—within the group. They use the knowledge constructions they have built—unique to their individual histories within the classroom community—to add to their own knowledge bases as well as for use in making contributions to the ongoing conversation of that community. Greene (1990) suggests a "cognitive-social epistemic" which "is a construct that values the historically and ideologically constructed nature of knowledge, as well as the critical role that individuals play in the construction of meaning" (p. 13). And observations by researchers (Ludlam,

1990; Fletcher, 1990) suggest that the histories individuals bring to social interaction events are worthy of consideration in looking at peer interaction events. For these reasons, the model acknowledges individual agency as part of the influence on the social interaction event. The interaction event, then, is fed by the multiplicity of social and academic purposes and the accumulated rules of interaction that have been established over time by the students for that particular classroom event.

b. The Goal of Being Socially Active

> ... literacy is not simply a set of skills; it is a social activity. No matter what the instructional objectives of specific tasks, children do not focus on objectives, but on tasks as activities—as whole experiences—that include materials to be used, a series of actions to be followed, and a way of talking during and about the activity (Dyson, 1984, p. 262.).

The central section of the model in Figure 2.2 (p. 20) focuses on the dynamic quality of the social interaction among peers while engaged in an academic task. Children arrive at school with five years of experience not only as cognitive learners, but as accomplished social operants. They understand well how their personal interests are inextricably tied to social interaction and that it is necessary to take on others' perspectives in order to fulfill those interests (Dunn, 1988). By age four or five, children are able to share with each other for empathetic reasons as well as for reasons of self-interest. Thus, by school age, children are adept at 'reading' and managing social situations, particularly in support of their own wants and needs, but also, at times, in consideration of the needs of others (Eisenberg, cited by Dunn, 1988). Once in school, fear of being alone or socially isolated in the school situation also drives children to learn the rules of their peer culture (Davies, 1982). And my own observations as a first grade teacher have shown me that children, even

very young, presumably 'egocentric' children, are willing to reconsider *what* they do in favor of who they are going to be *doing with*. (See also Moffett's quote in Chapter I.) A picture emerges of the student's agenda in contrast to the teacher's agenda: as careful as a teacher may have been to set up activities that will invite cognitive engagement and activate exploration, her invitations may still take second place to children's apparent need to feel part of a social unit.

Since the dynamic model attempts to focus on the peer interactions that take place *outside* teacher-student or teacher-group interaction, my intent is to acknowledge what is of central importance to the *students* more than what may be of central importance to the teacher or to schooling in general. Rather than being viewed merely as a medium or context to facilitate the accomplishment of the teacher's goals, peer interaction in this version of the model is viewed both as an *activity* and as a *goal* itself, *central* to the process we call 'school.' If being engaged socially and intellectually is what is central for students (the central box in the model), then the teacher's task becomes a *means* for that engagement. For them, the *doing* is the *ends*.[2]

c. Product as By-product

The third section of the model in Figure 2.2, as in Figure 2.1, deals with outcomes. Usually outcomes are equivalent to products such as observable evidence of academic achievement or the measurable use of certain cognitive skills. But what has customarily been considered the purpose or goal of schooling—the end product—in this model becomes a *by-product* of the primary goal, peer interaction itself. If involvement in an activity is the primary goal of the children, what is produced will be of secondary significance to them.

The first by-product of peer interaction is still the school-acceptable academic product—the completed workbook page, comprehension of a story in terms of external (teacher's or publisher's) criteria, the dramatic performance, or the collaboratively written story. Such products are more or less inevitable since usually, in schools, the consequences of *not* producing the required product—fear, discomfort, humiliation, loss of privilege, coercion, being left out, etc.—are significant enough that compliance is forthcoming from the students. Regardless of how it is elicited, whether by coercion or enticement, a visible or measurable product results from the interaction.

The second by-product in the Figure 2 model is the development of the cognitive skills that are called into use to accommodate the needs of the social interaction, as well as to complete the academic tasks. Bloome and I have shown how the intellectual skills that are chosen for use in carrying out a writing task may be based on the social goals of the moment, as much as or more than on the requirements of the developing texts (Bloome & Phinney, in press). When working socially, the intellectual skills and processes students practice and develop are by-products of the ongoing maintenance of their relationships.

A third by-product of peer interaction involves the classroom literacy skills, referred to by Corno (1989), that children develop in the process of managing the accomplishment of their personal goals within the constraints of classroom life. Children learn to manipulate, perhaps with varying degrees of success, the teacher's structure in order to meet both their own social agendas and the teacher's academic agenda. Some observations of children's awareness of classroom constraints, and their attempts to achieve their social

goals within those constraints, indicate the importance of social interaction and social goals in the children's lives (Davies, 1982).

The fourth by-product of peer interaction shown in Figure 2.2 consists of the social rules, roles, and legacies resulting from the peer interaction event. In the process of carrying out their social agendas, children continually re-negotiate their social rules and their roles and status in the group. At the end of an interaction event, a new layer of history is built that provides a base for the next event (Bloome & Phinney, forthcoming; Davies, 1982; Phinney, 1990).

The final set of by-products are those that accrue to individuals as a result of their participation in the peer interaction event. Ideally, each participant leaves the event having readjusted (or reinforced) his/her sense of personal autonomy and social identity in relation to other individuals.

d. Summary

In summary, although research that looks at children's social interactions in school from the learner's viewpoint is barely beginning, the work that has been done, together with the models explicated here, show that it is possible to look at schooling from this perspective. Children gradually accumulate a base of knowledge about the others in the class, about how they are likely to react in certain situations, what their interests are likely to be in terms of the choices they will make, what sorts of pressure they will bring to bear or allow themselves to be subjected to, and how they conform to group-established rules. The greater the interaction history, the more able children are to predict what may happen and how they must plan their decisions to accomplish their own goals. This history informs future events, and the cycle continues, as indicated by the double arrows in the model. The research study

described in this paper shows how children who have built an interaction history can use the knowledge to further their individual and group agendas through classroom writing activities.

B. Social Interactions and Writing Engagement

In the preceding section I looked at current research and thinking with respect to students' social goals as an integral part of the learning process in classroom settings. The section was more conceptual than descriptive of specific studies, as I presented a model for social interaction from a child's point of view to help visualize the direction that general scholarship may be taking. In this section of the review, I examine specific studies that have been done on social interaction in classrooms as children are engaged in academic activities, particularly writing activities. The question I am asking, here, is, "What research has been done that examines the nature of the social interactions manifested while students are engaged in academic activities, particularly writing activities, when they are not constrained by closely supervised adult interaction rules governing task implementation?" Although my search of the literature concentrates on studies in which the task activity is *writing*, a few studies on reading and other academic activities are included because they enlighten understanding of child-structured peer interaction in ways which make them applicable to writing activities as well.

For purposes of the review, child-structured interactions are defined as those situations where the teacher has not given specific direction in how the students should interact with each other. They may be together by virtue of group scheduling, peer or teacher selection, mutual interest in a choice activity, or purely by happenstance. Though there may be an explicit or implicit endorsement of conversational interaction and helping behaviors in

general, there is no specific instruction or follow-up from the teacher or researcher with respect to helping techniques. (The existence of overall rules governing classroom behavior in general is assumed.) Interaction is spontaneous, arising out of the children's contact with each other. Because of this stipulation that the interactions be child-structured, I have excluded the large body of work on peer response groups, peer tutoring, collaborative learning, and collaborative-apprenticeship learning which looks at groups of students who are specifically instructed in how to work together.[3]

Writing refers to composition in all its aspects, including oral or written planning, in-progress oral or written elaboration or explanation, drafting, revision, and editing. It is the creation of meaning ultimately represented through written representations, including drawing in certain situations. That is, in some elementary classrooms, particularly at the primary level where children are still being introduced to the alphabetic principle, teachers may define drawing alone as a writing activity when it takes place in a writing area or during a time of day designated as a writing period. Captioning or the taking of dictation by a teacher may also be part of the writing activity.

These stipulations—that the research be primarily on writing, that it be carried out in elementary (K-6) classrooms, and particularly that it have a primary or significant focus on child-structured social interactions—necessitated a further narrowing of the studies included in the review: it was important that the studies be carried out using an ethnographic or descriptive-observational type of research methodology. In order to control variables, experimental research designs would have to prevent certain activities from taking place and would distort the spontaneity of student responses by artificially structuring tasks and social groupings. The teacher

and students would not have gravitated naturally toward that way of operating, so that the insights and conclusions of the research would be based on contexts that weren't normal for that teacher and group of students.

All studies in this section concentrated on aspects of communicative competence.[4] Most of the attention in this respect went to three areas of focus: 1) obtaining responses from others; 2) developing and maintaining roles and status; and 3) maintaining and regulating social relationships. Developmental modification of interaction strategies with respect to obtaining responses from others was taken into consideration in two studies. Although review of the first area, obtaining responses from others, is helpful in providing a general perspective for framing the findings of this study, I will elaborate the second, roles and status, and the third, regulation of relationships. The research perspectives in these two areas provide the significant background for this study.

Although academic considerations were implicit in all the studies by virtue of their having been conducted in schools, during engagement in academic tasks, the extent to which connections were made specifically between writing and social interaction were very limited.

1. Communicative Competence: Soliciting Responses

In order to share responses to readings or obtain help or feedback on their writing, students must know how to engage each other in conversation. To gain access to others, children must understand that different forms of discourse are used in different contexts and for different purposes (Heath, 1983). Some researchers have looked at the components of classroom talk that provide access to communicative interaction among students. A summary of studies in this review in which access was a focus show that there are two

important aspects of gaining access: a) Students may need to understand the social rules established by the group that govern access, and b) children may need to adapt to specific contexts or situations on a moment-by-moment basis and to be able to select the appropriate context- or situation-specific strategies that are needed for their immediate purposes.

a. Establishment of Group Rules

Some of the studies suggest that peer interaction groups establish general, implicit rules that govern the nature and manner of the interactions among the participants. Groups establish rules for honoring bids for attention. Most bids will be honored if they are properly framed, suggesting that to refuse help or attention is unacceptable. Refusals to respond are appropriately done diplomatically or by using diversionary tactics rather than through blunt rejections (Wilkinson & Dollaghan, 1980; Phinney, 1990). Turn-taking and not holding the floor overly long were observed rules (Fletcher, 1990).

The number of topics on which a student is allowed to elaborate is also limited by the group. Ludlam's vocational high school writers established a limit on the number of stories a participant could tell: they allowed no more than two "planning" stories in the course of getting underway with their writing. In one event, when one student persisted beyond that limit, he was rebuffed or ignored by the others in the group (Ludlam, 1990).

b. Situation-Specific Strategies for Immediate Purposes

Studies showed that the context or situation has an effect on the strategies that are chosen to solicit responses from others. Furlong (1976), for example, found that the norms and values of a group of friends related more to the context—the particular subject or teacher—than to the particular group.

That is, the setting influences which interactional rules a group will establish rather than the group carrying with it a set of interaction rules applicable in any situation.

To be successful, students must choose the right strategy for the situation, or if unsuccessful, be able to adapt and try a different technique. With respect to manner of presentation, bids for response were most effective when they met one or more of the following criteria: they were direct, on-task, (related to the work to be done), assertive, directed to a particular listener, and revised if initially refused (Cooper, Marquis, & Ayers-Lopez, 1982; Phinney, 1990; and Wilkinson & Calculator, 1982); they were framed as requests rather than unsolicited comments and instruction was specific and clear (Cooper, et al., 1982); topic change was frequent (Phinney, 1990); and a tentative or "offertory" tone was used (Heap, 1989). Two studies suggested that as students get older, they are more successful in choosing strategies for gaining access to each other's attention, for regulating their relationships with each other, and for aligning their agendas with those of others as they engage in reading and writing tasks. (Cooper, Marquis, & Ayers-Lopez, 1982; Gere & Abbott, 1985).

Finally, the ability to adjust, moment-by-moment, to audience responses permits longer interaction time. Making use of the feedback that has been given allows the person holding the floor to keep the interaction going for a longer time (Michaels & Foster, 1985).

The research did not look at the details of how group rules are developed over time or at how they are specifically connected with reading or writing tasks compared with other kinds of academic activities. However, since most of the studies focused on situations in which reading, writing, or expressive language constituted the central activity, the research may imply

that part of developing as a reader or writer through peer interaction involves understanding the implicit group rules for getting responses from others, and skill and flexibility in using the strategies for gaining access.

2. Communicative Competence: Establishing Roles/Status

"... refusal to cooperate with requests [for action or information] might jeopardize friendships and standing in the group." (Wilkinson & Dollaghan, 1980, p. 270)

A second element of communicative competence that affects engagement in reading and writing activities is the establishment and maintenance of students' roles and status within the group or partnership. The reviewed studies suggest that to be able to engage in reading and writing tasks that are dependent on collaboration or help from others, students may need to develop a sense of what roles they and others play in the collaboration process and how those roles are balanced to protect their social relationships with members of the group. As the group develops a history of interaction events, and relationships take shape, students develop a knowledge of which students are competent in the various aspects of reading and writing. They also learn whether, and in what situations or circumstances, these experts are willing to share their knowledge. The literature addresses three areas with respect to roles and status: 1) the qualities of—and expectations for—leaders or experts in literacy activities, 2) the concept of role-switching, and 3) the concept of complementary roles or "equal" status. Furthermore, it appears that students learn how to take on different roles—as teacher or learner—according to the needs of the moment. They learn how to be authorities and how to share authority. As the group develops an interaction history, individual social identities are formed.

a. Leadership/Expertise

The studies suggest that a group recognizes those who are competent, expert, or knowledgeable (Healy, 1981; Michaels & Foster, 1985). In writing response groups, those who mastered the process of writing clear explanations received immediate positive recognition from the group (Healy, 1981). In group sharing sessions, the audience was responsive to those speakers who adapted their presentation to audience interests and expectations as they proceeded. Such expert sharers were more frequently called on by the peer leaders (Michaels & Foster, 1985). Students who were regarded as experts were expected by the group to share—to act as consultants or teachers (Forman & Cazden, 1985). And finally, those who were seen as consultants were also *given* more information by others. They seemed to become repositories of knowledge, to be tapped and fed by the group (Cooper, Marquis & Ayers-Lopez (1982). The studies did not investigate the personality factors or group needs that contribute to this dynamic.

The expert role may be group- or situation-specific and easily subject to change. Ludlam's (1990) study involved a stable peer writing group of four vocational high school boys. One of the boys, Cubby, was regarded, and regarded himself, as the writing expert of the group at the beginning of the first semester. However, as the others' writing improved and they began to gain confidence in themselves, his confidence eroded and he began to develop writer's block. His need for reinforcement and feedback increased. When one member dropped out of school, a replacement arrived who was more of an expert than Cubby and took over his role. Cubby almost stopped writing altogether, having apparently lost all motivation. It was Jock, the social leader of the group, who brought Cubby back as a writer by simply commanding him to get to work.

Fletcher (1990) found that children's reading performance, systems of gaining access to each other, and social and academic confidence levels varied considerably depending upon the relationship between the partners, the level of communicative and academic competence of each partner, and the nature of the reading task (whether required or self-chosen). One beginning reader in particular demonstrated a different attitude toward—and level of involvement in—reading when he chose his own book and was paired with a supportive, socially and academically competent partner than he had demonstrated when he was reading required material with a partner whose competence in reading was only slightly greater than his, and who did not support either his style of approaching reading activities or his need for face-saving outlets. These findings support Furlong's (1976) thesis that social relationships are dynamic, constantly readjusting according to the circumstances and the moment-by-moment interactions.

There are questions that might be asked about particular children who do not take on the leadership/expert roles the group want to attribute to them. Only one study (Wilkinson & Dollaghan, 1980) mentions a child who does not appear to be concerned with group membership. Though a competent reader, others were unable to get information, or even acknowledgement from this child. Most of us, as classroom teachers, have noticed such children in our classes. For a thorough understanding of classroom interaction, we need to include the 'socially independent' students in our studies as well.

b. Role Switching

Another skill that may be helpful in peer interactions is the ability of students to be either a teacher or a learner—to be able to give and receive, as

the needs of individuals or the group demand. There was almost no focus in the studies on sharing of leadership roles. Cooper, Marquis, and Ayers-Lopez (1982) noted that in dyads and groups involving close friends, teacher-learner role-switching took place. Friends seemed to be able to tolerate sharing of leadership roles. Transcripts of my own study of two best friends during writing workshop also showed evidence of frequent role-exchange (Phinney, 1990).

This is an area that needs further scrutiny since it could be reasonably assumed that the more ways of interacting people experience, the more versatile they may become in taking advantage of both social and academic learning opportunities.

c. Complementary Roles ("Equal" Status)

Closely related to the idea of role-switching is that of a complementary status in a collaborative or cooperative effort. The difference is that this view focuses on expertise in terms of information or process while role-switching focuses on issues of authority. Three studies looked at situations where knowledge, status, and communicative competence were in relative overall balance between partners, but where one partner had skills or knowledge the other didn't possess in situations where the skills and knowledge of both were needed for the accomplishment of the task. Each accepted the authority of the other in their particular areas of expertise.

In Forman and Cazden's (1985) study of middle school dyads solving chemical reaction problems, the researchers found that partners who work most collaboratively and at higher levels of problem-solving were those who adopted complementary roles where one filled gaps and provided scaffolds for the other in the process of accomplishing the task. One would select a

combination of chemicals for trial while the other provided guidance or correction.

In Heap's (1989) study of dyads composing at a computer, even though the teacher had *assigned* complementary roles—one child was the writer and the other was the computer technician—the children, on their own, assumed complementary roles in the composition process. The helper took the role of supporter: he attended to the writer's text, offered "candidate" story parts, filled in unfinished ideas, or orally re-read with the writer to re-establish flow. The designated writer took the role of decision-maker who was willing to receive and consider outside suggestions.

Dickinson (1986) noticed that first graders writing collaboratively at a computer adopted roles as technical experts, particularly with such mechanics as spelling and punctuation.

In summary, the studies reviewed suggest that in order for students to obtain information or help from others while maintaining their relationships and their status in the group, they may need to accept roles for themselves and for others. They do this by designating or acknowledging certain individuals as experts to whom they can both turn for help and feed information in order to help them maintain that status. For this to happen the designated expert must accept the role the group wants him/her to take. The expert helps the group develop in his/her area of reading or writing expertise and s/he develops as the collective knowledge of the group is fed back to him/her. Students will also alternate roles as authorities or experts within an interaction event when the relationship of the event-participants is strong enough to tolerate release of authority. And finally, students take on roles as experts in complementary aspects of the reading or writing task in order to more efficiently and effectively carry it out.

3. Communicative Competence: Maintenance and Regulation of Relationships

The third component of communicative competence affecting engagement in reading and writing and other academic activities, and also of importance to this study, is the manner in which relationships within the group are maintained and regulated. To be called a group, rather than a scatter of individuals, and for a group to develop rules of interaction, relationships among the group's members are formed. Relationships are the linkages, the affiliations among people that connect them in their actions and responses to their social and material environment. Through relationships, agreements are made about what is acceptable, information is exchanged, knowledge is generated, and projects that might be impossible for one become possible through collaboration.

This section is divided into three subcategories: 1) maintenance of behaviors related to the support of friendships or group cohesion, 2) regulation of behaviors that may be perceived as undesirable by one or more members of the group, and 3) specific strategies members of the group use in maintaining or regulating social interactions within relationships.

a. Friendships and Group Cohesion

The studies in this review indicate that school-age children seem to want to be together for companionship. For whatever reason, they often prefer to engage in activities if they know others will be near them, even if they won't be sharing exactly the same materials or engaging in precisely the same task. Simply keeping in touch or "being with one's friends" (Dyson, 1987, p. 20) appears to be part of the interaction cycle of young children. In the course of maintaining friendships, children will help each other with their

tasks, sympathize with their problems, and protect each other's sense of personal identity (Phinney, 1990). They use discussion of their reading or writing activity—the subject of mutual engagement—as the means for initiating conversation to stay in touch (Dyson, 1987; Phinney, 1990). When one person is having difficulty with their reading or writing task, another friend will help, or the children will work out the problem together (Phinney, 1990). Thus, a by-product of the desire to support the relationship might be increased knowledge of reading and writing skills and processes.

In our separate studies, Dyson (1987) and I (Phinney, 1990) observed that there seemed to be a motivation for interaction different from that of fulfilling a need to show competence, gain recognition, enhance social standing, or obtain information or help. Dyson (1987) pointed to examples of young writers' sharing of experiences, and dramatic and narrative 'play', as evidence that "children simply enjoyed being with each other" (p. 20). In my own analyses of young writers' conversation units [a unit of conversation bordered by silent work periods], I found that my pair of competent, self-confident first grade writers, who had developed a relatively long-term friendship, seldom initiated conversation units because of a need for help. Rather, their initiations usually took the form of comments or observations about writing in general, or about their plans for their stories. Their interchanges followed what Vygotsky (1978) might have called a "chain complex" (p. 64) of ideas, or, in Applebee's (1977) terms, who uses Vygotsky in referring to narrative development, an "unfocussed chain" (p. 344). Such conversation units did not have an overall cohesiveness that might have been expected if a request for help were the motivating force for opening them. The conversation units that included more than one topic of discussion, before closing for a work period, often moved from one subtopic

to the next as ideas were triggered by comments within the conversation. Thus, as an offshoot of their ongoing conversation, they discussed many different aspects of the writing process. I also observed incidents of one child helping the other save face when she made an error, and another incident where one child provided extensive emotional support, suggestions, and collaborative action when her friend was frustrated over a technicality in her drawing.

These observations suggest that students want to preserve their relationships, and, by school age, have developed an awareness of the need to take action that will keep them attracted o each other. In the process, they use the reading or writing activity in which they are engaged as a frequent focus of both conversation and action, a result that may benefit development of academic learning related to the reading or writing task. Specific strategies the children use are discussed below.

b. Regulating Undesirable Behaviors

The other side of relationships is regulating behaviors that are perceived as undesirable by a partner or the members of a group. Not only can the group have certain standards of what is acceptable to do or discuss, but individuals may have their own limits as well. The studies suggest that children protect themselves and the group by controlling comments and actions that exceed the acceptable limits.

In my 1990 analysis, I observed incidents in which one or the other child would control attempts at one-upmanship, regulate off-task talk and behavior, and re-direct or shut down topics that were disturbing to her partner. In the case of inappropriate topics, one of the girls was particularly uncomfortable with topics that related to sex or violence and used both direct

and indirect strategies (see section below) to limit such talk. Ludlam (1990) also found that his group had limited tolerance for off-task talk, and excessive storytelling, discussed earlier, was not tolerated by the group.

The effect on the reading or writing engagement is that individuals and the group can channel others' choices of books, writing topics, genres, words, the tools they select to write with, or even what they do with their writing in directions that the individual might not otherwise have gone. As a result it is possible that certain ways of thinking about the processes or purposes of reading or writing may not develop in a given group, while others may flourish. In this way, children's directions in reading and writing could be seen as by-products of the group's ways of interacting.

c. Strategies

Students seem to use specific strategies to maintain their relationships as well as to control certain types of behaviors, either to discourage unacceptable behavior, or to encourage pleasing behavior. Competence in the use of such strategies enables students to pursue their own goals, both social and academic. For example, if other students are discussing one student's writing topic in a way that takes it too far from the author's plan, s/he might re-direct or even close the conversation using diversionary strategies or comments indicating closure of the discussion. Students whose goals may be to maintain social interaction as long as possible, will use prolonging strategies that maintain their audience's attention on them and their ideas.

There can be a moment-by-moment mutual interplay between audiences and speakers as speakers develop working relationships with their audiences. Michaels and Foster (1985) found that members of an audience would indicate, through questions and other forms of response, what pleased

them. The speakers used a wide variety of strategies to hold their attention, which included gestures, enunciating clearly, elaboration, questioning, providing suspense, maintaining cohesive sequence, asking for questions, repetition of key phrases, using tense shifts or dialogue, providing interesting and authoritative information, and picking up on leads. My (1990) transcripts showed topic change as a possible strategy for gaining attention, and transcripts from other studies variously showed verbal rebuff, ignoring, diplomacy, agreeing and acknowledging, offering alternatives, and diversionary strategies for maintenance and regulation of both social and literacy-oriented behaviors in different situations (Fletcher, 1990; Ludlam, 1990; Phinney, 1990; Wilkinson & Calculator, 1982; and Wilkinson & Dollaghan, 1980). In his tight group of high school students, Furlong (1976) found eye contact, collusive laughter, and visual approval through watching to support group maintenance behaviors. Regulatory behaviors included ignoring others, working alone, refusing to talk or non-verbally interact, and criticizing or admonishing. Directive language is used to control and direct peer's writing, particularly among the younger writers (Gere & Abbott, 1985; Dyson, 1987). Students also negotiate the use of resources, which includes both bargaining and threatening, and they share their writing efforts to attract others to their company (Dyson, 1987).

There is indication that maintenance and regulation of relationships seem to be important, highly varied, and flexible parts of classroom interaction which affect and are affected by the writing process. Social, psychological, academic, and cognitive elements appear to be inextricably intermingled, and the content of the students' compositions may be re-directed, repressed, modified, or altered by an individual's or the group's social or psychological needs. In the case of Ludlam's students, for example, a

student may wish to tell more than three stories in order to find a comfortable topic on which to write. This may the be the individual's agenda. But if the group has established a three-story limit to the pre-writing stage of composition—the group's agenda—the unsatisfied student may have to settle for what might be a less-than-satisfactory topic, thereby affecting not only his content, but his writing-process strategies. For example, it could repress his interest in writing; it could pressure him to write when he isn't fully interested, thereby broadening his skill and discipline as a writer; it could force him to seek more help from his peers in managing a difficult topic than he might do otherwise, helping him develop greater communicative competence and social interaction skills, as well as writing skills; or it could teach him to be more selective in what he presents to the group, enabling him to consider and review more topics silently, before requesting feedback. Similarly, the student's difficulty finding a topic might contribute to his status in the group during the writing class. If it were the case that the group goal was to sabotage the teacher, class, or activity, as with Furlong's subjects in some of their classes, the student's lack of investment in his topic could help him be accepted, even a leader, since non-participation in the writing activity was an objective. If the group had accepted its participation in the writing activity, however, as was the case with Ludlam's group, the student's difficulty might result in a lowering of his status.

One final possibility is that peer interaction during writing activities may have a constraining effect on student's writing development. Two researchers, Heap (1989) and Healy (1981), cited intrusion on students' ownership of their writing as a possible problem. Healy pointed out that there can be so much input into a piece, in one narrow area of concern to the group, that the text can lose the author's original intent or focus. Heap also

mentioned the possibility of collaborative writing reinforcing "limiting strategies" (p. 154), writing strategies that are products of the moment-by-moment social context in which they are produced rather than upon one author's larger, perhaps more cohesive plan. Both researchers call for further research in this area.

4. Summary

Recent studies of student-student classroom interaction have highlighted aspects of communication among students that affect academic and social learning. Student groups establish rules for permitting and controlling access to each other in particular situations and individual students employ a versatile repertoire of strategies for obtaining responses to their requests for help or bids for attention from each other. Students respect and reinforce expertise and leadership abilities, are capable of sharing leadership, particularly among friends, and can complement each others' areas of expertise for purposes of accomplishing a task. They support each other in maintaining friendships, and regulate each other to protect their individuality, privacy, concentration, ownership, and sense of appropriateness. There is indication that they use the reading and writing tasks they are given as media, tools, or catalysts for carrying out their social purposes. A brief look at developmental considerations indicates that younger children may tend to be more self-oriented in their interactions, and less able to reflect on or discuss their work than older students.

Although these studies contribute to our understanding of ways children use academic tasks to structure their social relationships while fulfilling academic and social goals, they do not show how the task and the relationships are transformed by the moment-by-moment construction of the

social interaction events. That is, they do not show how the social functions of language that are identified relate to the ongoing construction of the children's writing, or how engagement in writing is intertwined with social interactions. This study will look in detail at these aspects of socially constructed events and writing engagement.

C. Identity and Writing

1. Building Identity

Building an identity is a social process that begins early. Says Bettleheim (1977), "As soon as a child begins to move about and explore, he begins to ponder the problem of his identity" (p. 47). It could be suggested that identity formation begins at least as early as birth itself, for children's responses to particular sounds and stimuli can be measured within 24 hours (Smith, 1986) and the process of connecting begins: identity is our sense of self in relation to our social, physical, and epistemic world. Identity doesn't form in a void; it forms in the process of being involved in activities or events which, if they are a regular part of our social interactions, themselves become tokens or symbols of the bonds between ourselves and the people we want to be like. Participation in such events eventually forms a representation of the person we see ourselves to be in the world.

In the case of one aspect of literacy, reading, a number of theorists, researchers, and practitioners (e.g., Doake, 1981 & 1990; Holdaway, 1979; Jewell & Zintz, 1986; Teale, 1978; Meek, 1982) believe that reading to children from infancy causes them to associate parental closeness and love with the act of reading itself.

> Children learn mostly by having what there is to learn demonstrated in their presence. When they see and hear those around them talking, quite naturally they want to learn to talk, too. When they see their loved ones engaged in reading books and obviously enjoying the process, they will develop a desire to learn to do the same thing. ... Books and reading become associated with intensely pleasurable and rewarding activities (Doake, 1990, pp. 5-6)

Later independent reading becomes a desirable activity not only because of the satisfaction it delivers intrinsically, but because it reconstructs that feeling of comfort and emotional warmth.

But identity is complex and something of an oxymoron, involving both attraction and repulsion in a push-me-pull-you relationship. The word identity is used to mean two almost opposite states of being. When we refer to someone maintaining their own identity, we are talking about separateness, autonomy, or individuality—a sense of uniqueness within the group and independence from the group, though always relative to the group. When we say someone identifies *with* someone else, we are talking about connectedness—a conjoining of one person's self-image with their perception of the image of another. Burke defines "ambiguities of substance" in his use of the term "consubstantiality." "In being identified with B, A is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another" (1969 [1950], p. 21). In their observations of young children in school, Dyson (1987) and Solsken (forthcoming) note the drive for both individuality and belonging. Dyson identifies the difficulty children can experience in learning to balance their need to be special—to be recognized as competent and distinctive—with their desire to belong to the group—to be with and accepted by their friends. Solsken refers to children's negotiation of issues of separation and

connectedness in her discussion of literacy and its relationship to identity, gender, and work.

2. Identity and Literacy

Long before entering school, then, the complexities of identity formation have manifested themselves, bringing with them a legacy of strategies children have developed to help them cope with the resulting tensions and confusions. When they enter school, literacy learning becomes a major focus in their lives; it is among the most overtly valued activities and the one on which the most time is spent. In the early years of traditional schooling, children who fail are rarely those who have difficulties only with math, science, or social studies: they are held back because of their difficulty in learning to read and write at the median rate of progress required by most school systems. Successful literacy learning often becomes the most lauded achievement, the source of success in the eyes of those in power, the gateway to the privileges of free time and enrichment activities, the means to medals and awards. In short, it is a source of status and power within the school culture, and, as such, desirable for those who perceive it to be within their grasp. For those who share this value, being and becoming literate is part of their sense of self, of their consubstantiality with the literate community.

Conversely, if becoming literate is perceived as becoming identified with a group which excludes membership in—or is irrelevant to—another group that is more important to the individual's sense of self, the individual will seek means of rejecting, evading, or ignoring involvement in literacy activities. In an ethnographic study of Hmong (Laotian) immigrants in Philadelphia, Weinstein-Shr (1989) describes one elderly man in her ESL class who made no attempt to learn English, did no homework, didn't participate

in class, and showed no ability to read or write. She assumed he was totally illiterate. Later, when her study carried her into the community, she discovered that he was the clan leader, that he was fully literate in Hmong, and he maintained scrapbooks and records detailing the history of his community. Becoming one with the English-speaking culture and its language and literacies was unnecessary to his sense of identity.

Furlong (1976) found that a group of marginalized teenage girls shifted their identity with literacy and school activities according to their interest in the content of a course and their attitude toward the teacher. Solsken (forthcoming) found that 5 to 7-year-old elementary school children were influenced in the degree to which they participated in literacy activities according to their perception of the gender-appropriateness of the activities. For example, boys who perceived literacy activities as female-sponsored work avoided such tasks or transformed them in ways that would make them acceptable. In such cases, they perceived their mothers as being the primary advocates of literacy learning. However, Solsken also noted that, "... when family gender roles are less strongly differentiated because fathers are more equally involved in children's nurturance and literacy ..., issues of separation and connectedness may be negotiated without implicating literacy as a gender-identified activity" (typescript, p. 6/60).

Identity, literacy, schooling, and culture, then, are inextricably intertwined, whether identity is dependent on *rejecting* literacy as a means of asserting membership in a more influential group, or on *accepting* literacy as an indicator of membership in the approved or desired culture; whether a student's personal identity is connected to the school's particular literacies, or to others not endorsed by the school. Here, again, Moffett's quote is apt: "Ultimately a student ... is more interested in his relation to other people

than he is in a subject, because psychic survival and fulfillment depend on what kind of relation one works out with the social world" (1983 [1968], p. 119).

3. Identity and Writing

Only one researcher, Dyson (1989), has begun to address young children's sense of self with respect to writing engagement. In her work on primary-age children's social interactions while writing, she does not use the term identity, but as noted above, she recognizes the distinction between children's need for "being special" and for "being with one's friends" (pp. 63-65). Her observations have led her to conclude that writing for children in the beginning stages is an extension of their social worlds. Rather than writing becoming a process of disembedding or decontextualizing language (Donaldson, 1978; Olson, 1977), children's writing develops as their social worlds develop:

> ...within the context of story writing in school, children may gradually realize print's social and evaluative functions, and this understanding supports their efforts to find new ways to capture their experiences and engage in social interactions within the texts themselves. The expansion ("disembeddedness") of children's written texts thus comes from the expansion of the social worlds within which those texts figure (are "embedded") (1989, p. 256).

With respect to the concept of identity, Dyson's interpretations show how differently children respond to and use writing in their lives. She sees the process of composing as a process of negotiating "the boundaries among multiple worlds" (p. 259)—both social and personal, situational and historical.

Although Dyson's work identifies the general concept of separateness/ connectedness with respect to writing engagement, she doesn't identify the

specific ways in which identity and writing transform each other. To explore this further, it is necessary to systematically analyze children's conversations as they write.

D. Summary

The literature reviewed here shows a) that viewing children's social interactions as they engage in writing activities is important if we are to understand writing engagement from the child's perspective; b) that peers working together while engaged in writing and other academic activities in school use the activity in which they are engaged to regulate their relationships with each other; and c) that children's identity as writers in school may be formed at least partly in conjunction with the social interactions in which they are involved as they engage in writing. The studies identify a variety of strategies used by the students to stay on task, help or control each other, and establish their position in the group during the period of the activity. However none of the studies show how either writing or social relationships are transformed in the process of interacting socially while writing. There are no systematic studies on identity and writing engagement, although Dyson's (1987, 1989) work indicates that such a relationship exists in a general way. One of the goals of schooling should be to help children become committed to the use of literacy not only as a life-long tool for coping adequately in the workplace, but as a means to pleasure, satisfaction, and continued learning in their personal lives. For this to happen, children must feel that literacy engagement is an integral part of their sense of themselves in relation to their associations with others. One of the purposes of this research is to learn more about how writing, social relationships, and identity are embedded in each other, and how each is

transformed by the social interactions that take place during writing engagement.

1. Using a somewhat more restricted definition, Nystrand (1989) refers to this as "procedural engagement." See also Unsworth's (1988) discussion in terms of teaching implications.

2. For my purposes in this dissertation, I realize I am strongly emphasizing this point. I acknowledge that this may be somewhat overstated, that at times children are interested in - and work toward - final outcomes.

3. For example, peer tutoring, as defined by Goodlad & Hirst (1989), is an instructional method in which "a professional teacher organizes the activity of the non-professionals (*tutors*) as they minister to the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries of the process (*tutees*)" (p.14).

4. Sociolinguists, chief among them, Hymes (1985 [1974]), Halliday (1986 [1975]), and Goffman (1983), have shown that communicative competence is the basis of successful social interaction. Individuals' abilities to interpret, respond to, and use the forms of talk, the registers of speech, and the rules of conversation applied in the group in which they find themselves at a given moment contribute to their roles and social status in that group. Social development theory (Dunn, 1988), anthropological studies in family literacy (Heath, 1983b; Taylor, 1983), and work in the auditory responsiveness of newborns (Smith, 1986) lead to an indication that the process of becoming competent in the use of language begins at birth; from no more than 24 hours old, children hear, interpret, and use sounds and signals to fulfill personal needs and wants, thereby learning the social and linguistic rules of their family, and some of the rules of the community and broader culture, long before they start attending school. The research in this review seems to be grounded in assumptions about the value of communicative competence as a factor in social interaction.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

A. Introduction

In order to explore the relationship between children's social interactions and writing activities, and the ways in which they negotiate their sense of personal and social identity as they write—the questions outlined in Chapter I—an ethnographic approach was taken. To explore children's relationships to each other, from their point of view, it is necessary to observe them in the natural settings in which they customarily interact, engaging in the normal, everyday processes of classrooms. The study was designed to explore carefully, over a full, ten month school year, the social interactions of one class of kindergartners during their engagement in writing activities. In keeping with the purpose of the study that the focus be on the children's agendas, the interactions analyzed were those that were neither directed nor monitored by the teacher, but occurred in the natural course of the children's being together as they wrote when the supervising adults were engaged elsewhere in the classroom.

B. The Setting

1. The School

The school is a private laboratory school for a college's department of education which includes an infant care center and pre-school, and an elementary school. The elementary school division includes two classes of each grade, K-6, with a usual enrollment of 20 children per classroom. Funding is partially subsidized by the college and partially tuition-supported. Students are principally the children of college faculty and staff members,

older college students, and professional families within commuting distance. There are some children attending with scholarship assistance. It is an admissions priority to maintain a minority enrollment percentage in line with the percentage of minorities in the population of the region, and special scholarship funds are allotted to support that priority as needed.

Each classroom is staffed with a Supervising Teacher, one or two undergraduate student teachers who are present three mornings a week, and sometimes a Teaching Fellow (Master's candidate) who teaches in the afternoons in Grade 1-6 classrooms or works as an assistant teacher mornings in the half-day kindergartens. Some rooms have a full- or part-time instructional aide. The school also has music, art, physical education, and library teachers with whom the classes are regularly scheduled. From their first days in the school, the children are accustomed to being observed, photographed, and audio- and video-taped by the classroom teachers, parents, teachers from other schools, supervisors, college students, and professors. They are used to interacting with each other and with many adults in an active and stimulating environment.

2. The Classroom

The kindergarten classroom in which I observed shares a two-room portable building with the school's other kindergarten. The building is located on a separate part of the campus from the main school, making it, in effect, a separate school. Although the room was relatively small, it was carefully and economically organized into activity areas. The largest area was the meeting area which doubled as a library/reading area. There were areas for blocks, writing, art, discovery, math, games and puzzles, group work, and drama. The room was well supplied with a wide variety of written texts related to the

environment (e.g., labels), ongoing projects, record-keeping, information, and literacy for entertainment. Material on display was always relevant to the current needs and activities of the children and changed regularly as classroom events evolved. A pet guinea pig lived in a glass cage, and plants for observation were kept in the discovery area. The room had its own sink and bathroom.

C. The Participants

1. The Students

There were twenty children in the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural class, ten boys and ten girls, primarily white, but including one East Indian, one African-American, and two Asian-Americans. Most of the children had professional parents who lived and worked in the area. Most had attended the pre-school, run by the college, for one or two years; those who did knew at least half the other children in the class when school opened.

2. The Teachers

There was a full-time supervising teacher, Kelly Wykowski,[1] who had 15 years of teaching experience at the lower elementary level. She was trained in the teacher-training program of the college that runs the school, lectured regularly in the courses for pre-service teachers, and had been active for at least six years in sharing her teaching philosophy and methods with other teachers through inservice and summer workshops. She read in the literature directed to teachers, and participated in teacher-researcher projects through the college, through outside-sponsored study programs, and through her own interest in understanding the ways in which she and her students learn. By the definition of "metateaching" described by Bull (1989), she was a "reflective teacher"; she attempted to monitor and learn from her own teaching. I had

known Ms Wykowski as a fellow teacher for six years including a year of job-sharing during the year prior to this study.

There were two female, pre-service student teachers (each three days per week, doubling up on Wednesdays), during the fall semester, and two different ones during the spring term. None had previous full-time teaching experience, though all had worked with young children in day-care, camp, or related situations. There was also a full-time aide, Jill Blair, who was a certified elementary teacher with one year's experience as a substitute teacher. She was present all morning every day and performed instructional, technical, and supervisory tasks as needed.

3. The Researcher

I was the sole researcher for this project. Many of the parents and children in the school knew me, or knew of me, because I taught in the school for six years prior to the research year, and had taught older siblings of several of the children in this class. Three children knew me by name on the first day of school. The day I arrived to start observing, the teacher introduced me to the class as someone who was there "to learn about how children learn." I explained that I would not interfere with their work, and that they should feel free to ask me to move if I was in their way. For these reasons, the participants were not self-conscious or anxious about the data collection, and were comfortable with my presence.

While I was in the room, I was friendly with the children, but I made an effort to keep a low profile in order to maintain the condition that the children's interactions would not involve unnatural adult intervention. Unless an issue of safety was involved, I didn't initiate engagement with the children during my data collecting except for occasional, short, informal

interviews to clarify statements or written meanings. When children occasionally asked me for help, I either helped them non-verbally (as when they needed a piece of paper pinned up on the wall, for example), or I referred them to other supervising adults in the room. When situations occurred in which I might have intervened if I were the regular teacher, such as verbal disputes, for example, I left the intervention up to the supervising adults.

The result of my passive presence in the room was that a number of the children didn't seem to be aware of me at all. On three occasions between mid-November and April I addressed each of three children by name. Each of them asked me how I knew who they were. One even said, "I think I've seen you somewhere before." Another indication of my anonymity was that when children handed out cookies on their birthdays, though they included the other adults, they usually did not give me one, even when the teacher asked if they were sure that everyone in the room had received one. (I had pre-arranged with the teacher *not* to correct this if it should happen.)

The combination of general familiarity and acceptance by parents and teachers and my quiet, friendly, relatively non-participatory presence seemed to allow the children to interact in front of me in an uninhibited manner.

D. Permission to Conduct Research

Written permission had been granted for my videotaping by the school director, the principal, the teacher, the Human Subjects Review committee of both the supervising school (a college laboratory school) and the University of Massachusetts, and the parents of each of the children in the classroom. Separate written permission for the interviewing conducted in the spring was received from 18 of the 20 sets of parents. The two children whose parents did not respond were not interviewed.

E. The Literacy Curriculum and Teaching Style

During the daily meeting the teacher involved the children in a variety of literacy activities that were integrated with the current themes being explored (monarch butterflies, giants, dinosaurs, upcoming events, holidays, etc.) or with daily routines. Reading the calendar, a daily message, the schedule, an opening song, the activities list, etc. were examples. Writing demonstrations such as list-making, record-keeping, or group letters that, similarly, supported the day's or week's activities were carried out, and children were involved in their creation. Invitations were given regularly for writing projects that children could take up during the daily activity period or during free time. Project time was a period of the day when children were engaged in required activities related to current themes. Literacy engagement was usually integrated into these activities. For example, under the supervision of the teacher, a small group of children brainstormed descriptions of dinosaurs that were opposites (big/small; carnivore/ herbivore; crested, not crested; etc.) and the teacher wrote label cards for the categories. The children then sorted pictures of dinosaurs according to the various characteristics, placing the pictures under the written labels for the categories in which they belonged.

The teacher was flexible in carrying out her routines and plans. She changed her planned focus for the day if an event, such as the hatching of a butterfly or the appearance on the floor of a sunspot in the shape of a parallelogram, attracted the children's interest. She believed children learn more through their own discoveries, and from events that interest them, than from arbitrarily chosen, externally imposed lessons. She was also conscious of the importance of building a constructive social atmosphere in

the classroom in which children would feel safe and valued; she spent considerable time, particularly at the beginning of the year, helping children understand the general rules (sharing, turn-taking, courtesy, etc.) that she felt should govern the social interactions of the room.

F. The Daily "Activity Period" and the Writing Area

The period of focus for videotaping was the daily "Activity Period" when the children chose from among about 10 activity areas set up to encourage engagement in a variety of activities, including math, puzzles and games, blocks, science discovery, art, drama, reading, writing, etc.

For most of the videotaping sessions, I taped the children who chose to work in the writing area. In this area there was a rectangular table with 8 chairs and a set of shelves containing a variety of paper, pre-stapled booklets, markers, pencils, stencils of figures and letters, inking stamps with a genre theme (e.g., fairy stories) or category (e.g., animals), and other similar materials. Although the children's production took the form of drawing more than the creation of written text, they understood that there was a distinction between work done in the writing area and work done in the art area. Writing area work carried with it the expectation that it be written-text oriented, while art work, although occasionally labelled, did not have to be accompanied by a story or extended explanation or description. If the children didn't want to write the text themselves that would accompany their drawings (using approximated, or invented, spelling), the teachers encouraged them to produce text orally, which was sometimes transcribed by a teacher. Because they were regularly asked about the stories or descriptions that accompanied their drawing, their oral productions were similar to genres of written texts, more formalized than oral speech, often fantasy stories.

Writing, then, in this classroom, was defined as much by location as by the nature of their activity.

G. Data Collection

My primary data consisted of videotapes of children engaged in writing activities, supplemented with informal interviews with the supervising adults, field notes, copies of relevant written products, data from interviews with the children made by one of the student teachers in the fall, and data from interviews with the children made by me in the spring. The field notes supplemented the videotapes by catching conversation that the microphone could not pick up, adding to the non-verbal descriptions, and, particularly, noting background information about other classroom events or information from the teachers that enlightened the conversations and writing engagements of the participants.

Since the purpose of the study was to look at writing from the child's perspective, a necessary piece of the research was to ask the children about their views of writing and learning to write. In April and May individual interviews were conducted in the classroom with the 18 children whose parents had granted permission. These interviews focused on asking the children about the purposes for writing, about learning to write, and about what it was like to write together with others. The questions I used to guide my interviews are in APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS. The children's responses supplemented and clarified my analyses and interpretations of their interactions as they engaged in writing in school.

I videotaped on 38 days between September 11, 1990 and May 22, 1991, including 11 days in September. My purpose in being in the classroom so much in September was twofold: a) I wanted to record the initial

establishment of activities and social relationships in the classroom, and b) I wanted the children to become accustomed as soon as possible to my presence and to the presence of a video camera in the classroom.

My initial plan was to videotape for a block of five to seven days four times during the year, in September, November, late February, and late April. However, in November, I realized I had lost some continuity with respect to the children's developing relationships as well as the community knowledge and social relations that had been building around and through the curriculum. I adjusted my schedule to record, as often as possible given vacations and my own constraints at least once a week from that time on. Table 3. 1 shows the actual dates on which video recordings were made.

Table 3.1: Videotaping Dates

September	11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26
October	1, 2
November	1, 10, 13, 15, 20
December	6, 13, 20
January	10, 17, 24, 31
February	7, 21
March	7, 8
April	2, 11, 22, 23
May	1, 16, 17, 21, 22

The principal focus of my data collection was on the writing table during the daily half-hour Activity Period, although there were several days when either no children went to the writing table, or the students who were there weren't talking with each other. On those occasions, I used the time to focus on another activity area where conversations were taking place, or on

several different areas during the Period, in order to add to the background data for perspective and comparison. I recorded most of the rest of the classroom day as well, including the Morning Meeting and other whole-group meetings that took place at every major transition period, Project Time (small groups working on more structured and directed activities connected to a theme or specific curricular focus), and transition periods when some children were interacting freely on the rug while others were cleaning up. Thus, most days that I was present gave me about two hours of recorded classroom activity. The extra data provided background information on events that had occurred during my absence, both with respect to curriculum, and to relationships and current interests among the students.

I collected only 30 samples of written work during the year because of both logistical and social impediments. Although I had permission to copy the children's written products, the copy machine was in another building. Even when the structure of the morning permitted a time-break in which I could take work to copy, the children were protective of their work and were not always comfortable about my removing their booklets and papers from the room and they almost always took their work home with them at the end of the day. Out of respect for the children's sense of ownership of their work, and because of the copying difficulties, I compensated for the lack of samples by taking extra care during the videotaping to telescope in on what they produced in order to be able to describe it accurately, as needed, during the analysis.

H. Data Analysis

1. Narrowing the Focus of the Ongoing Analysis

In keeping with the ethnographic principles noted earlier, data analysis was ongoing throughout the study. Before describing the specific data analysis techniques I used, I will describe how the research questions led to a focus on a specific set of videotapes that became the central focus of the analysis.

After the first two or three videotaping sessions in September, I started the process of indexing the Activity Periods by noting down who was at the table, what the seating arrangement was, and by annotating footage points that marked each shift in conversational topic, as well as segments within a topic that stood out as interesting for one reason or another. I transcribed a few short segments from a September and a November session to get a tighter focus on the nature of their conversations with each other. I found over time that certain children went to the writing table more frequently than others and some continued their interest throughout the year. Some children who were 'regulars' at the beginning of the year developed other interests and went less often as the year wore on. Others almost never chose the writing table during the times I was present, although the teacher told me that all children went from time to time throughout the year.

It also became apparent that some of the children who chose to come to the writing table talked very little, and when they did, their conversations did not seem to reflect close ties between their writing activities and their social relationships with each other. Although this in itself is significant, it was not the focus of this particular study. I was interested in attending most closely to those situations where children do converse as they write and do make ties

between writing and their social relationships as expressed through conversational and written language.

By early spring, a more specific focus for the research took shape. As I continued to index and study the data, I found that there was a group of girls who regularly went to the writing table as their Activity Period choice. Whenever two or more of them were there at a time, they carried on a running conversation with few totally silent work periods of more than a minute. They engaged in a wide range of writing activities such as card-making, imitating the creation of a Morning Message (a public letter to the whole group written on chart paper by the teacher each day), letters to friends and family, word books, illustrating and finishing book-starters provided by the teacher, etc. However, the one kind of writing in which they engaged repeatedly throughout the year involved the creation of "plays" in which they included themselves and their friends as characters. Because of the girls' long-term involvement in this type of writing, and because of its richness in terms of the blending of sociality and writing, I gave particular emphasis to this aspect of the data in my analysis.

2. Selective Indexing and Transcribing

As the focus on the core group of girls took shape, I began to index tapes more selectively, concentrating on segments where the girls' interactions around writing and story construction seemed, on the surface, more potentially useful with respect to the research questions because of the quantity of verbal interactions specifically related to their writing activities. At this time I also transcribed a large portion of the December 13th Activity Period. This was the earliest segment in my data in which lengthy segments of the girls' conversations were centered on their plays and their inclusion of

each other in them. Through this selectivity, repetitions of certain interactive behaviors connected with writing and story creation began to become apparent. Using type case analysis techniques (Green & Bloome, 1983), I kept notes on these patterns and began to develop a preliminary list of interaction strategies that tied to the writing, which I cross-referenced with strategies I found in the research literature discussed in Chapter II. This list was gradually refined as I moved back and forth between the literature and the data I collected.

In order to find patterns of interaction that tied to the girls' writing, I sought behaviors that showed up repeatedly over time. Thus, in choosing the conversations I would use for the detailed microanalysis aspect of the study, I examined selections from more than one month, and earlier and later in the year. For this reason I also transcribed large segments of the Activity Periods videotaped on March 7 and April 2 to provide distanced material to add to the transcription of the December Activity Period. During both of these later Activity Periods members of the core group were actively engaged throughout most of the half hour in conversations about their plays. As a basis of comparison, and to gain perspective on the range of writing activities in which the girls participated, I also transcribed smaller segments of periods in which the girls were engaged in writing activities other than story-creation.

3. Breakdown of the Transcriptions

a. Blocks

Each of the three major Activity Periods was transcribed in several "Blocks," each four to seven pages long. The blocks simply reflected the inadequate power of my word processing program to in-take more than five or six pages of data in the two-column format I was using before it became too

slow to be efficient. When in-take began to slow, I terminated the block at the end of a conversational topic and continued where I left off with the next block. Dividing the transcripts into blocks also made location of particular portions more efficient later.

b. Topic Units

Modelled after the conversational analysis method described by Green and Wallat (1981), each block of transcript was divided into Topic Units. A Topic Unit was a unit of conversation around one general topic. When the conversation focus changed, a new Topic Unit was designated. This change could be within the general topic of story-creations, such as a change from discussion of one child's story to that of another, or it could be a change to a non-writing related topic such as a trip or a birthday party. Short, temporary shifts of topic within a larger, ongoing Topic Unit were not separately distinguished in this segmenting of the blocks. When demarcation between Topic Units was not clearly definable, I either kept the message units together in one Unit until another was clearly distinguishable, or, in the case of an overlap of a few lines, where closing statements from one Topic Unit also served as opening statements or "triggers" for another, the transition lines would be included in both Topic Units.

c. Message Units

The smallest unit of conversation was a "Message Unit" (Green & Wallat, 1981); each time a child spoke, a numbered line was given to each sentence or phrase that carried a separate message, either as a linguistically definable meaning-unit, or by virtue of a change in intonation that would signal a change in the direction or focus of meaning or emotional impact from the previous unit. The following segment of transcript and subsequent

description explain more specifically how the message units were determined.

Transcript 3. 1 (12/13, Bl. 2, T.U.#1)

182	Debra:	[talking as she draws and as Jess comes back to her seat]:
183		This one's just gonna be the beginning of the show.
184	Jess:	Yeah,
185		it's gonna be a show.
186	Debra:	Can I be in it?
187	Jess:	Maybe.
188	Debra:	Please?
189	Jess:	Maaybe.
190		Maybe maybe maybe.
191		I don't know yet.
192	Sam:	Don't keep saying, 'Please,'
193		or she won't
194		probably won't let you.
195	Jess:	That's what my mom always tells me.

Debra's first statement, line 183, is a complete sentence and represents a single Message unit. She utters it without a pause. Jess's turn is broken into two Message Units because there is a slight pause between her, "Yeah," which confirms Debra's statement, and her repetition, in her own words, of Debra's idea, which serves to further support Debra. The next three sets of utterances, lines 186, 187, and 188, again stand as individual Message Units. The words in

Debra's question are uttered as one flow of language, and the next two turns are single words. Jess's turn in lines 189, 190, and 191 is divided into three Message Units because her voice drops and she comes to a stop after the first, stretched out 'Maaybe," then runs the next three 'Maybe's' together in a stream before dropping her voice for a breath, and finally making a closing statement that is voiced as a smooth sentence. Sam's turn is also broken into three Message Units. He pauses after 'Please,' because it is a clause break as well as a signal for a shift in direction dictated by the word 'or.' Line 193 is a Message Unit because it is the start of a new clause, though he doesn't finish and breaks off with a pause. His pause also signals a slight meaning shift, a qualification of his original statement signalled by the word 'probably.' And Jess's sentence that closes this Topic Unit is a complete sentence without intonational or meaning breaks, listed as a single Message Unit.

4. Coding the Transcripts

The process of transcription and the determination of Message Units helped me further develop and refine the list of strategies the girls used in their interactions, and to identify more specifically repeated elements that were connected with the girls' story-creations. Once the transcriptions were complete, I categorized the strategies and writing-connected elements and made a matrix that would allow me to code each Message Unit in terms of these descriptors, again following the Green and Wallat (1981) model. After I coded several Topic Units, I refined my definitions of the descriptors, changed some labels to better reflect the definitions, and consolidated those that were too similarly defined to be consistently distinguishable. (See APPENDIX C: DEFINITIONS OF CODING DESCRIPTORS.) Figure 3.1 shows an example of the final coding sheet with the transcript, above, coded.

		183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195
Writing	Who-b-whom				•	•	•	•	•					
	Chr chrstcs													
	"est" value													
	Process	•	•	•					•		•	•	•	
	Content				•	•	•	•	•	•				
Ties	S – TX – J										•	•	•	
	D – TX – J				•		•							
	J – TX – J			•		•		•	•	•				
	J – TX – D		•											
	D – TX – D	•												
Chnge	Revising													
	Negotiating						•	•	•					
Separateness	Ignoring													
	Denying													
	Criticizing										•			
	Refsl to Prtcp													
	Status Assumptn													
	Imposng/Drctng										•			
	Holding Floor								•			•		
	Eval/Jdgng												•	
	Decidng/Cntrll	•		•		•		•	•	•				
Connectedness	Accptng Offer													
	Requesting				•		•							
	Complying													
	Agreeing		•											
	Status Bestwl													
	Informing	•		•						•		•	•	•
	Clarifying									•				
	Critiquing													
	Offrng/suppt										•			
	Inviting													
Access	Closing													•
	Naming													
	Transitioning				•						•			
	Initiating	•												
Form	Response -										•			
	Response - 0					•		•						
	Response +		•											•
	Statement	•		•					•	•		•	•	
	Question				•		•							
Source														
	Sam										•	•	•	
	Jess		•	•		•		•	•	•				•
	Debra	•			•		•							

Transcript ID: 12/13 (Bl. 2, T.U. #1)

Figure 3.1: Example of Data Coding Sheet

Both the process of coding the Message Units, and the finished sheets themselves helped me define the patterns, or 'norms' of behavior, the girls used to regulate their interactions with each other and carry out their story constructions. Some relationships became visible in the matrices, where, for example, a concentration of dots would show in one section which corresponded to a concentration or repeated pattern in another. In Figure 3.1, one visible relationship is that when the children are talking about the *process* of writing there are more dots in the Connectedness section than when the conversation switches to a discussion of *content*. A large 'hole' shows in the matrix when the switch takes place. It can be seen, too, that even though the conversation was initiated by Debra, talking about her own story, it is quickly taken over and dominated by Jess, who changes the focus to her own story, as shown by the diagonal row of dots in the Ties section. It is when the focus is on her story that the conversation switches to content and Jess establishes her ownership—her separateness—through controlling responses. Correspondences of this nature, discussed in detail later, helped identify more clearly the rules and processes of interaction and ownership which governed the girls' working and talking together.

The entirety of the December, March, and April transcriptions are in APPENDIX B: SELECTED TRANSCRIPTS. Definitions for each of the categories used in the Coding Sheets, and their descriptors, are found in APPENDIX C: DEFINITIONS OF CODING DESCRIPTORS. Transcriptions of smaller segments from other dates, used only for illustration purposes, were not coded.

I. Interrater Reliability

A sample interrater reliability trial was carried out as a check on the potential replicability of the coding descriptors as defined in Appendix C. A graduate student with professional experience in coding children's language was given two two-hour training sessions to learn the definitions and application of the coding descriptors. She then coded on her own two previously unseen topic units, consisting of 59 Message Units. Out of 1121 possibilities for agreement for the 59 Message Units (19 possibilities per Message Unit), she coincided with my coding on 997, or 89%. Although this was only a small sample, it indicates that trainees can duplicate the coding with reasonable accuracy.

J. Limitations of the Study

This study, which took place in a single classroom, could not produce findings applicable to writing classrooms in general. It was a description of one activity, writing, in one classroom of one school. A single group of girls was chosen for focus because of their sociability and natural tendency to talk, a factor that may make them exceptional. In this sense it is like a single case study, suggestive rather than normative. However, a larger study would not allow the time for the kind of fine-grained, microanalysis of moment-by-moment events and close knowledge of a group over an extended period of time that the close study of one classroom allows. This study offers insights into the relationship between social interaction and writing engagement in one setting which can then be examined in a larger range of settings, and it raises questions grounded in sociolinguistic theory for further research in more controlled studies. It does not offer explanations of behavior for writing classrooms in general.

A second limitation is that the study was primarily classroom-based. Although some information about the children was gathered from the teacher and informal conversations with the parents, knowledge of factors influencing the children's perceptions of writing, their outside experiences with writing, and their social interactions and relationships was not available in this study. Findings can only be based on what was seen in the classroom itself, limiting conclusions about origins of behavior and attitudes. However, teachers themselves often do not know a great deal about the home lives of their children, particularly in the first years of schooling. Findings from classroom-based studies simulate the knowledge that teachers would have as they observe their students.

Thirdly, a study controlled by the researcher could address more specific questions than a study that looks at what happens naturally. For example, in this study there were no controls that would enlighten developmental, intellectual, or experiential factors that could influence children's relationships with each other as they write. By controlling the setting, the social groupings, and/or the tasks, some of these factors could be taken into account. The advantage of *not* controlling variables in a study such as this is that we can see what happens in a real classroom, operating in its normal manner, so that the picture that emerges more truly represents the social interactions in a classroom writing context. Once we have an idea what happens as a matter of course, particularly patterns that emerge from studies of a number of individual classrooms, we then have a knowledge-base for structuring studies that would show what happens when changes are made.

Although this classroom-based study of a single group of students has its limitations in terms of generalizability, lack of external information, and lack of control over the events, participants, and tasks, it has the advantages

of a case study which can provide detailed, systematically analyzed information about the moment-by-moment interactions that make up the larger context of school writing from the child's perspective.

1. Names of all participants in this study have been changed to protect anonymity.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

A. Introduction and Overview

My research goals for this study were a) to examine the relationship between involvement in writing activities and social interaction among students, and b) to examine how children writing together in a school setting establish their sense of separateness as distinct and capable individuals and their sense of connectedness as members within the writing community in which they are working. I will present the findings related to these questions within the following two conceptual frameworks: 1) findings about classroom writing as a social process, and 2) findings about identity and the balance of separateness and connectedness. However, it is difficult to discuss one set of findings without overlapping with findings or sub-concepts from another because writing, classroom social interactions, and identity are intertwined. That is, discussion of findings within one conceptual framework will involve concepts that inform the other. The sequence of presentation is designed to develop first those findings which provide a foundation for later findings. I will substantiate the findings in two ways: 1) through the evidence from the systematic microanalysis of the data, followed by 2) interpretive analyses of selected transcripts and interview segments.

As noted in Chapter III, during the ongoing data analysis I focused my attention on a group of girls who engaged in social interactions as they carried on their writing activities. In order to provide a framework for understanding the findings more clearly, I will briefly present some background information on the group of girls in the study and the story construction activity before discussing the findings themselves.

B. Background Description of the Story-construction Activity

The following general description of the group's social composition and the story construction activity is based on long-term field work, regular and informal discussions with the teachers, and the interviews with the children.

There were five girls, Jess, Debra, Ruth, Cindy and Michelle who frequently sought each other out to work and play together. Jess, Debra, and Ruth seemed to be the central core of the social group, with Michelle and Cindy participating to a somewhat lesser degree. I also saw Jess, Debra, and Ruth as the focus-group for the study because they were the children who most frequently engaged in the play-writing activity that was analyzed. Jess seemed to have the highest peer status and was often the leader. At times Debra and Ruth competed for her friendship and attention. Debra, in particular, tried to establish a position as Jess's close friend. Michelle and Cindy participated in the play-writing activity, though less intensively, and other children were often present at the writing table, but were not as involved as these five girls.

The play-writing activity consisted of drawing (or creating pictures using rubber stamps) while simultaneously discussing the characters and the story line of the play. The girls themselves identified the activity as playwriting in their conversations. Following are samples of message units that illustrate their identification of the genre as playwriting:

- "Jess, / d'you wanna be in my play?"
- "Now we can have plays. / I can't wait until we have the plays."
- "James. / At my show d'you wanna be the king?"

- "Cindy, this is you. / But we're gonna do this at my birthday, / so I'm gonna save it . . . "

- Debra: "This one's just gonna be the beginning of the show." Jess: "Yeah / it's gonna be a show." Debra: "Can I be in it?"

Debra may have been the one who started the playwriting activity. She had attended a pre-school the previous year where extensive use of dramatic activities was a major part of the curriculum. Kelly (the teacher) suggested that the activity started when the girls asked to act out stories in class during a period of several days in the fall, following a loosely enacted dramatization of a class-made version of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Whatever the source of the initiative, the activity seemed to be motivating enough that the girls continued to engage in the play-writing activity throughout the year.

A main feature of the playwriting activity was that the girls named their characters after themselves and their friends. Although the playwriting activity remained the framework for the girls' use of each other as characters in their stories, my data does not show that they acted out any of the stories they created at the writing table. At the end of each Activity Period, they put their writing booklets into their cubbies to take home at the end of the day. With one exception, the girls did not seem to be bothered by the fact that they didn't act out these plays. The exception was Michelle who expressed her dissatisfaction in a comment to me that she didn't like being in the other girls' stories because they never did anything with them afterwards. Although Michelle did participate occasionally in the character exchange process, she was not as active as Jess, Debra, and Ruth.

Writing in a standard form (using letters or letter-like symbols to represent words and ideas) occasionally accompanied the girls' drawings in the form of labels or short captions written in approximated spelling, but

most writing, or writing-like activity, was done when the story was completed. Within the focus group, Jess and Michelle seemed the most comfortable about accompanying their drawing with standard writing at the beginning of the year. Ruth and Cindy began to increase the amount of standard writing during the late fall and winter, and Debra began to write more than one or two words at a time during the last month of school. Most extensive writing, however, was done in the form of dictation to a teacher. Teachers took transcriptions of stories near the end of the activity period as frequently as there was time.

The series of drawings in Figure 4.1 illustrate the kind of end-product the girls would produce. This one was written by Jess in December. By herself, she wrote the title and her name on the front cover, shown in Figure 4.1a, and a list of six girls, including herself, who would be in the play, on the last page. (This list is not included in Figure 1 to preserve anonymity. For the same reason I have substituted the name "Jess" for the author's real name in Figure 4.1a.)

During the composing process, Jess had identified the fairy on the right, in Figure 4.1b, as herself, the fairy in the middle as Ruth, and the fairy on the left, the "babiest fairy," was designated as Cindy. The character portraying the king, in Figure 4.1e, was James during the composing process. (The remaining scenes were not discussed in the transcript.) The story text was dictated to a teacher at the end of the Activity Period.

The girls' stories tended to be more cohesive and complete as narratives when they gave the dictation to the teachers than when they were actually constructing them. They usually added details and portions of plot that were not mentioned in their discussions. Sometimes they used their

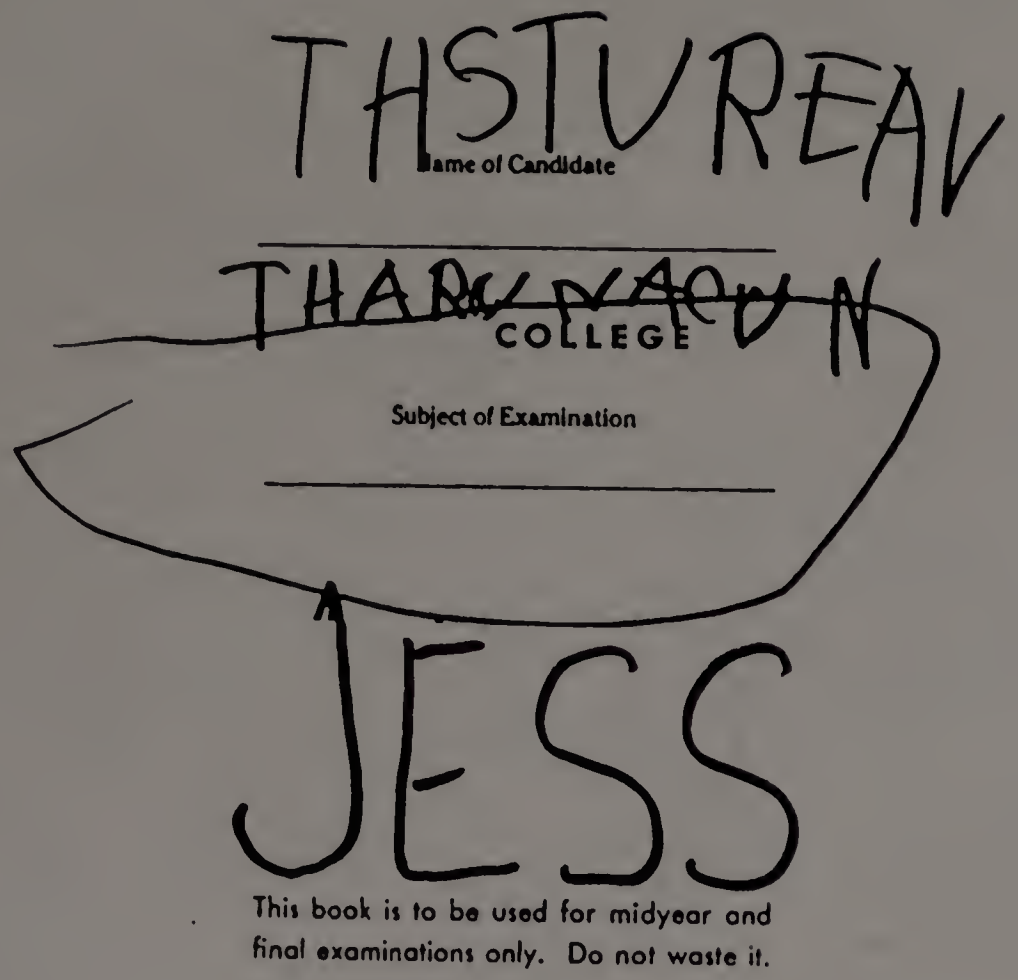

Figure 4.1a: Cover

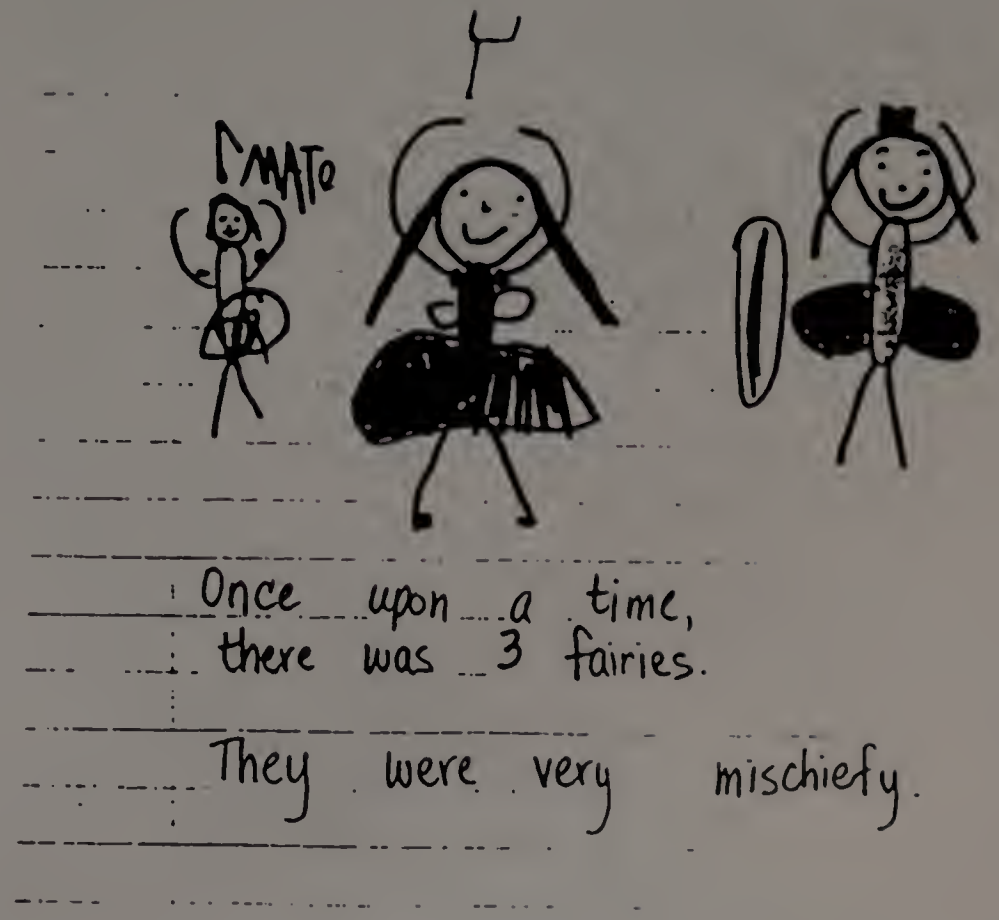

Figure 4.1b: Page 1

Figure 4.1: Jess's Story of the Three Fairies

Continued next page

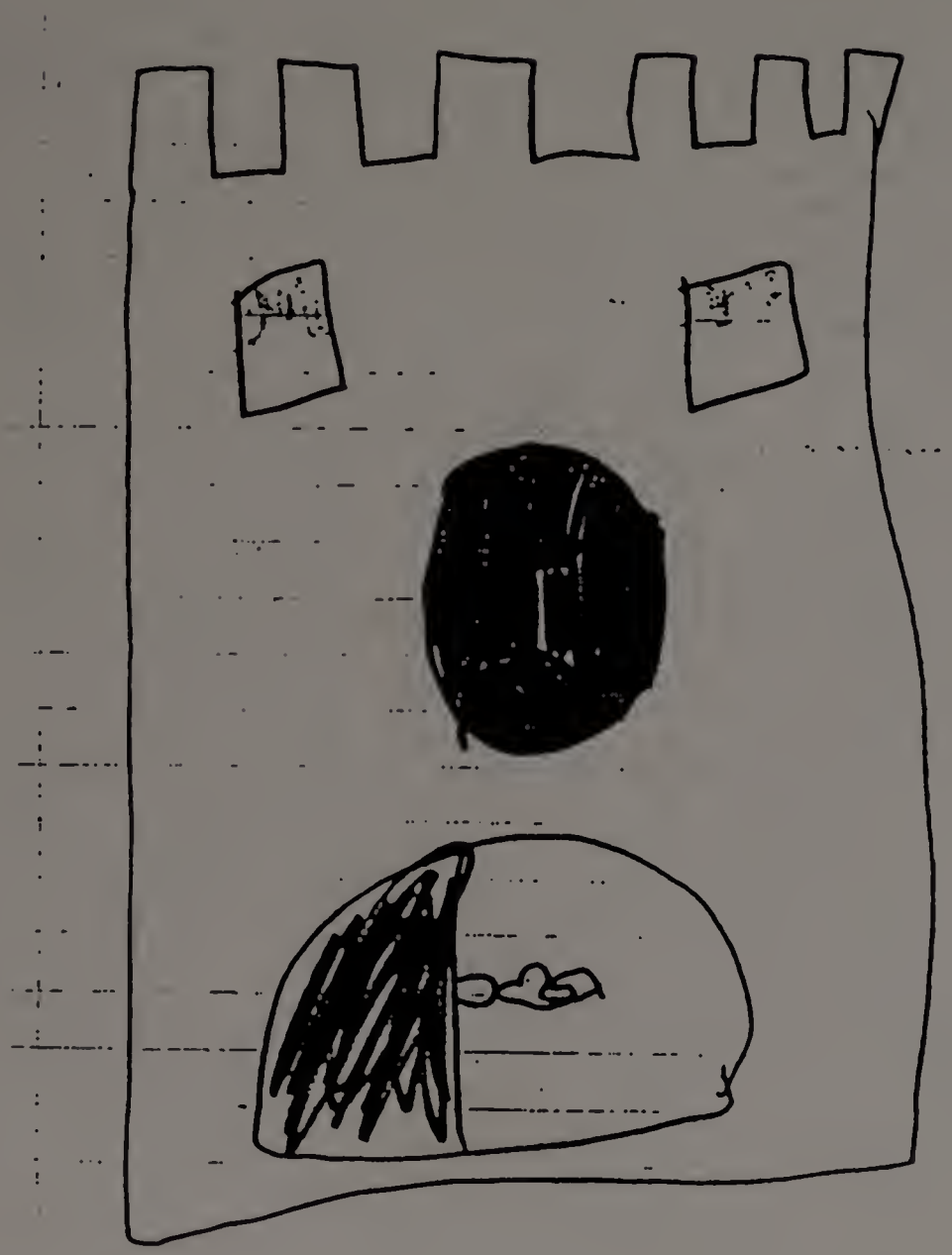

Figure 4.1c: Page 2

And they went into their secret house. That was the door to the magic kingdom. It was a secret place.

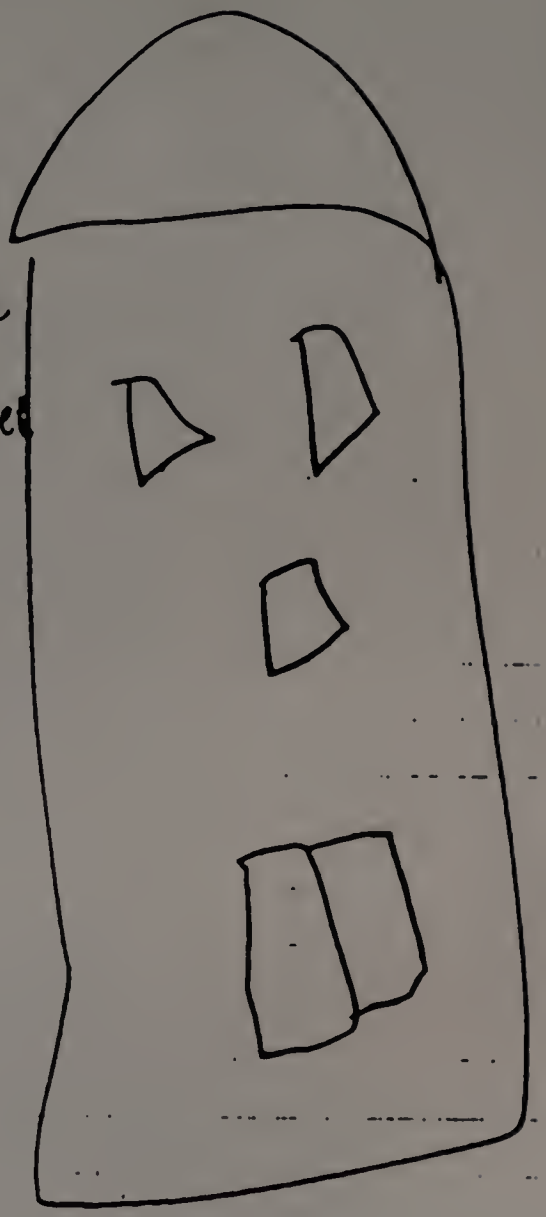

Figure 4.1d: Page 3

Figure 4.1 continued

And the king was angry. He was angry because the three fairies had gone.

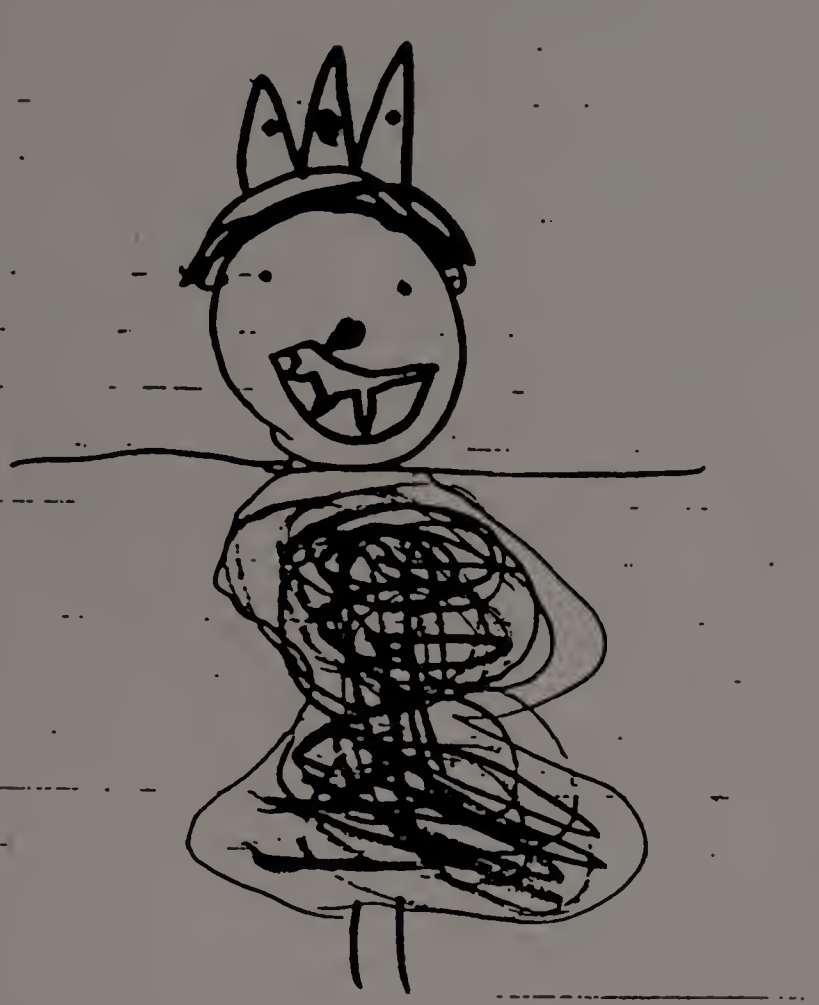

Figure 4.1e: Page 4

And the king's daughter, the princess got in love with the prince of the jewel land.

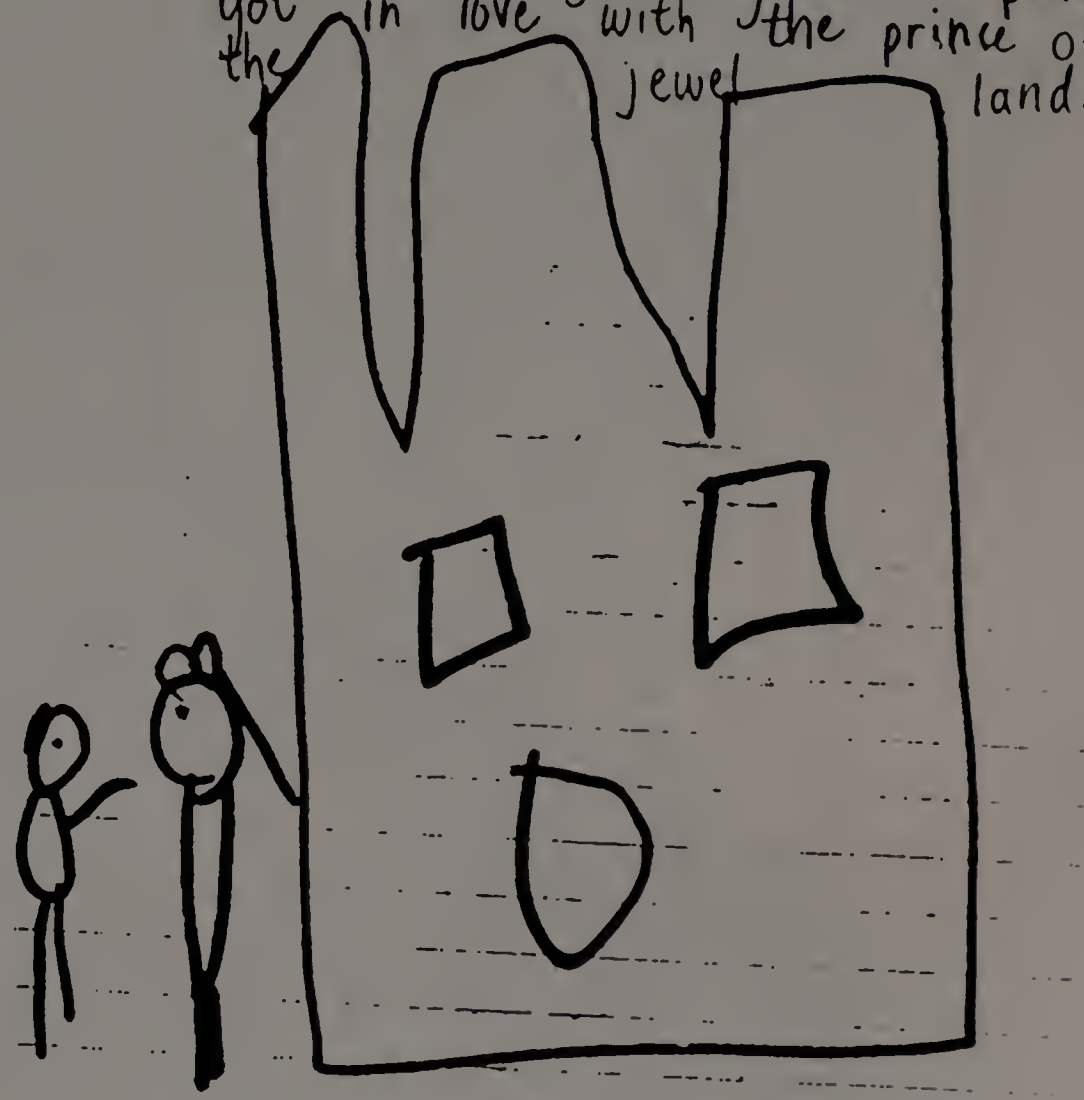

Figure 4.1f: Page 5

Figure 4.1 continued

friend's names to identify characters when they gave dictation, and other times they did not, as in Jess's story, above.

In the rest of this chapter I will present the findings within the two conceptual areas of a) Writing as a Social Process and b) Identity and the Balance of Separateness and Connectedness. Within the framework of Writing as a Social Process, the findings fall into three sub-sections: 1) findings related to relationships between story construction and ways friends are included as characters; 2) findings related to relationships between children's sense of ownership of their writing and social interactions; and 3) findings related to relationships between story construction and issues of status. With respect to identity, I will present the findings in terms of the balance between separateness and connectedness in relation to the girls' story constructions.

C. Writing as a Social Process

In this section I will discuss findings that showed relationships between the writing activity and the functions associated with social interactions. I used the coding sheets to aid in find these relationships. Figure 4.2 is a blank sample of the sheet. As discussed earlier, the dimensions and categories represented on the coding sheets were not determined a priori. Coding conventions and analysis were determined and refined over multiple preliminary analyses of the transcripts. That is, the analysis was the result of working back and forth over time between sociolinguistic theory and multiple data sources collected in the study. On the coding sheets, the categories that principally address functions associated with social interactions are "Form," "Access," "Connectedness," and "Separateness." The categories that principally address writing are "Change," "Ties," and "Writing." There is

Writing	Who-b-whom																									
	Chr chrstcs																									
	"est" value																									
	Process																									
	Content																									
Ties																										
Chnge	Revising																									
	Negotiating																									
Separateness	Ignoring																									
	Denying																									
	Criticizing																									
	Refsl to Prtcp																									
	Status Assumptn																									
	Imposng/Drctng																									
	Holding Floor																									
	Eval/Jdgng																									
	Decidng/Cntrll																									
Connectedness	Accptng Offer																									
	Requesting																									
	Complying																									
	Agreeing																									
	Status Bestwl																									
	Informing																									
	Clarifying																									
	Critiquing																									
	Offrng/suppt																									
	Inviting																									
Access	Closing																									
	Naming																									
	Transitioning																									
	Initiating																									
Form	Response -																									
	Response - 0																									
	Response +																									
	Statement																									
	Question																									
Source																										
	Transcript Line																									

Transcript ID:

Figure 4.2: Blank Coding Sheet

overlap within each set of categories because some sub-categories by definition indicate a relationship between writing and a social function, event, or concept. For examples, "Status Bestowal" is used to code message units that show that the author has given her friend a position of status in her story. The "Ties" section shows whose story is being discussed by whom. And in the "Writing" section, the last three sub-categories, " 'est' value" (referring to 'prettiest,' 'oldest,' etc.), "Character Characteristics" (age, clothing color, etc.), and "Who Be Whom" (which friend gets to be a designated character) are all used to code aspects of using friends as characters in the stories under construction. Most of my findings with respect to writing as a social process show relationships between the content of the girls' stories and combinations of patterns from the categories marking social functions, coded in sections of the matrix other than the "Writing" section.

Three general categories of findings are presented: 1) findings about the relationship between story construction and the inclusion of friends as characters; 2) findings about relationships between ownership of writing and social functions; and 3) findings about relationships between story construction and social status.

1. Relationships Between Story Construction and Inclusion of Friend-Characters

The transcripts and the coding sheets show that the girls regularly included each other as characters in their stories. The regularity of inclusion is registered in the "Who Will Be Whom" category on the coding sheets (abbreviated as "Who-b-whom"). As explained in APPENDIX C, the "Who Will Be Whom" category was used to code message units that made reference to discussions of which among them would represent a character in one of

the girls' stories. The "Who-b-whom" is a sub-category of "Content," which represents all message units in which any aspect of the stories were discussed. In order to see the relative importance of the inclusion of each other in their stories, I calculated the percentage of the occurrences of message units coded "Who-b-whom" over all the coded content message units. Of the 929 message units coded for the three transcripts, a total of 304 message units, or 33%, were coded as "Who Be Whom." There were 83 occurrences in the coded portions of the December transcript, 100 in March, and 121 in April. Figure 4.3, a coding of Topic Unit #3, Block 2 of the December 13th transcript shows an example of coding of message units in the "Who-b-whom" column and will provide a basis for further discussion.

This was the first taped session in which I saw the girls' inclusion of each other in their stories. The occurrence of "Who-b-whom" message units is clearly visible in lines 229-237. The coding sheet also shows, in both the "Ties" and "Source" sections, that all the girls were involved in the discussion. Ruth, whose story is the one under discussion, started off by "Inviting" participation (Lines 228-229), but moved on to "Complying" (lines 234 and 237) in response to some "Imposing/Directing" by others (lines 232 and 236).

The transcript is an example of a conversation free of conflicts in which the principal focus is on Ruth's development of her story and her effort to include her friends in it. For the purposes of my discussion, I will focus on the message units that address Ruth's story, and omit any analysis of the four lines (238-241) in which Debra starts to talk about her own story.

		227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	236	237	238	239	241	242
Writing	Who-b-whom			•	•	•	•		•	•	•				
	Chr chrstcs		•												
	"est" value														
	Process	•						•						•	
	Content		•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•				•
Ties	D – TX – D											•	•	•	
	C – TX – R									•					
	D – TX – R						•	•							
	J – TX – R				•	•									
	R – TX – R	•	•	•					•		•				•
Chnge	Revising														
	Negotiating														
Separateness	Ignoring														
	Denying														
	Criticizing														
	Refsl to Prtcp														
	Status Assumptn														
	Imposng/Drctng						•			•					
	Holding Floor	•						•						•	
	Eval/Jdgng														
	Decidng/Cntrll								•		•	•	•		•
Connectedness	Accptng Offer				•	•									
	Requesting														
	Complying								•		•				
	Agreeing														
	Status Bestwl		•												
	Informing						•			•		•	•		•
	Clarifying														
	Critiquing														
	Offrng/suppt														
	Inviting		•	•											
Access	Closing														•
	Naming	•						•							
	Transitioning														
	Initiating	•										•			
Form	Response -														
	Response - 0														
	Response +				•	•			•		•				
	Statement	•					•	•		•		•	•	•	•
	Question		•	•											
Source	Cindy									•					
	Debra						•	•				•	•	•	
	Jess				•	•									
	Ruth	•	•	•					•		•				•
	Transcript Line														

Transcript ID: 12/13 (Bl.2, T.U. #3)

Figure 4.3: Inclusion of Friend Characters

Transcript 4.1 (12/13, Bl.2, T.U.#3)

227	Ruth:	[turning to Jess]: Jess,
228		What color do you want to be?
229		Do you wanna be one of the fairies?
230	Jess:	Yeah
231		I wanna be one of the fairies.
232	Debra:	[not looking up]: I wanna be one of the fairies, too,
233	Ruth.	
234	Ruth:	'kay.
235	Kirsten:	[near Debra, beyond camera most of time]:
236		Me too.
237	Ruth:	'kay.
238	Debra:	I'm drawing a book about . . . .
239		drawing a book about . . . .
240		[lifts head and looks up]
241		um . . . .
242	Ruth:	I'm first making me, though.

The interpretive analysis of the transcript itself, aimed at exploring this use of friends as characters, will show three aspects of this practice by these girls: "Friends as Characters by Invitation," "Assigning Attributes to Friend-Characters," and "Announcing a Desire for Inclusion in Another's Story."

a. Friends as Characters by Invitation

Ruth's opening pair of questions (Lines 228-229) indicate that it is acceptable to include friends as characters in the stories that are created at the writing table and that the friends may be allowed to choose their characteristics. However, the sequence of the questions indicates a more subtle and complex dynamic. Ruth opened the conversation about her story by asking Jess what color she wanted to be (line 228). Without waiting for an answer, Ruth followed with a second question (line 229: "Do you wanna be one of the fairies?") that, logically, should have come first. This suggests that Ruth may have realized she should get permission to include Jess as a character before she asked her for her color preference. Asking permission, by way of an invitation such as Ruth's in line 229, occurred 29 times in the three transcripts; ten times in the December transcript, 13 times in the March session, and six times during the April session. Jess's affirmative response reinforced both the acceptability of being in Ruth's play, and the appropriateness of obtaining permission to include her (lines 230 and 231). By feeling she should ask permission, Ruth was recognizing that Jess had the right to refuse to grant that permission, an implicit norm the group seems to have established for this type of story-creation process which will be discussed in greater detail in the section on ownership of writing and social functions. This incident, however, better illustrates the occurrence of the use of invitation as a form the girls used to include each other as characters in their stories.

The finding here, then, is that there is a correspondence between discussion of the content of the girls' stories and the occurrence of invitations to friends that they represent characters in their stories. Friends were also included in an author's story by announcement, rather than invitation.

However, this finding connects more appropriately with issues of ownership and authorship, and will be discussed in detail in section 1.C.2, "Relationships Between Ownership of Writing and Social Functions."

b. Announcing a Desire for Inclusion in Another's Story

Invitation was not the only way to be included as a participant in another's story. Debra's statement, from the transcript on p. 85, that she wanted to be in the story ("I wanna be one of the fairies, too, Ruth," lines 232 and 233), confirmed by Ruth's compliance (" 'kay") in line 234, illustrates another finding: a member of the group could *announce* her desire to be in a friend's story. Cindy, who, in effect, repeats Debra's statement by saying "Me too" (line 236), was also accepted as a character by Ruth (" 'kay," line 237). A count of incidences where one child announced her desire to be in another's story, coded as "Statements," "Informing," and "Imposing/Directing," as well as "Who-b-whom" (note lines 232 and 236 on the coding sheet in Figure 4.3, p. 85), showed a total of 17 occurrences among the three transcripts; six in the December session, seven in March, and four during the April session. Requesting a position was also a regular means of being included as a character in another's story, though slightly less frequent in occurrence than announcements of intent, or invitations by the author. A request for inclusion would resemble the following examples, taken from the data:

- "Can I be in it?"
- "Can I be a little sister?"
- "Can I be in your play, too?"

There were 12 occurrences throughout the three sessions: three in December, five in March, and four in April.

The finding is that being included in another's story can be accomplished by requesting inclusion or announcing a desire to be included as well as by being asked. Although requests and announcements of a desire to be included were somewhat less frequently used than being included by invitation (or announcement by the author, to be discussed later, as noted), the regularity of the occurrences suggests that an expression of interest in being included as a character was an acceptable means for gaining a place as a character. I will show some of the complexities of involvement of friend-characters through findings in the other subsections of this discussion, and in the section on Identity.

c. Assigning Attributes to Friend-Characters

The data showed that not only did the girls include their friends in their discussions of the content of their stories, but they also discussed how they themselves and their friends would be represented in the stories. Message Units that involve discussion of how the children represented their characters are coded as "Character Characteristics" (abbreviated as "Chr chrstcs" on the sheets). Like the "Who-b-whom" category, "Character Characteristics" is a sub-set of "Content." Of the 653 occurrences of "Content" message units, 286 Message Units (or 44%) were coded as "Character Characteristics." There were 95 occurrences in the December session (49% of the 193 "Content" message units for the session), 156 in March session (47%), and 35 during the April session (27%).

Returning to Transcript 4.1 (p. 85), line 228 ("What color do you want to be?") is an example of the practice of giving descriptions or attributes to friend-characters by the author of the story, coded in the 'Chr chrstcs' column. In this event, Ruth's question about color showed that an author has the right

to allow another to choose an attribute of the character she was creating (in this case color). Unlike the question of permission in line 229, her question in line 228 offers a privilege. Ruth was not asking permission to color the Jess-fairy, she was offering Jess a chance to make a choice about what color. That is, if it were a question of permission, she might have asked, "What color may I make you?" or, "May I color you blue?" Implicit in her question was an assumption of ownership, that it was in Ruth's power to grant such a choice if she wished. However, the fact that Ruth brought up the issue at all also indicated a consideration of her friend's ownership of her own persona and her preferences in how she wanted to be represented. Ownership by the author over the use of character attributes and ownership of a participant's persona will be discussed in section C.2., "Relationships Between Ownership of Writing and Social Functions."

The finding here is that when these children talked about their story constructions, discussion of the portrayal of their story-characters, who were cast as their friends, was a significant aspect of their talk. The sensitivity to how friend-characters were represented seemed to be one of the obligations attached to including a friend as a character in a story. Discussion of how they proposed to portray each other was a regular part of the girls' conversations and could become very complex, as I will elaborate later.

d. Summary

To summarize the findings presented in this first section, my data show that in the course of writing what they called "plays," this group of girls borrowed or leant each other's real-life names and personas for use as the characters in the stories. It was acceptable by an author to invite or announce the inclusion of a friend as a character, and it was acceptable for a friend to

request or state a desire to be included as a character. Similarly, the girls discussed the descriptions of their characters with each other. Attributes could be requested, assigned, or attributed through invitation. These findings provide the foundation for the more complex relationships between the girls' story constructions and their social interactions that follow.

2. Relationships Between Ownership of Writing and Social Functions

A visible and frequently occurring relationship between social functions and the content of the girls' stories shows in the way that an author establishes authority over her work. I will use Figure 4.4, a portion of a topic unit from the March transcript, to illustrate the general nature of this finding.

The "Ties" section of this transcript shows that the story under discussion was Ruth's and that Ruth did most of the talking during the segment, visible also in the "Source" section. Several other columns have large concentrations of dots as well. In the "Form" section many "Statements" are coded; in the "Connectedness" section, the "Informing" and "Status Bestowal" sections are frequently coded; in the "Separateness" section, many message units were coded under "Deciding/Controlling"; and in the Writing section, "Content" was the focus, with the emphasis on "Character Characteristics" and "Who Be Whom." There is a particularly visible correspondence among these columns between lines 54 and 60 where Ruth makes a series of seven statements that inform the others of decisions she has made regarding story content, in this case with respect to who will be whom and what age they will be. Below is the transcription of the statements.

		30	32	33	35	37	40	41	43	44	45	46	47	48	50	51	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
Writing	Who-b-whom	•		•	•	•		•	•	•			•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Chr chrstcs				•	•				•			•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	"est" value				•																			
	Process		•				•				•	•					•							
	Content	•		•	•	•		•	•	•			•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ties																								
	J – TX – R													•										
	D – TX – R	•			•																			
	R – TX – R		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Chnge	Revising																							
	Negotiating																							
Separateness	Ignoring																							
	Denying																							
	Criticizing																							
	Refsl to Prtcp																							
	Status Assumptn				•									•										
	Imposng/Drctng				•									•										
	Holding Floor		•				•										•							
	Eval/Jdgng																							
	Decidng/Cntrll			•		•			•	•			•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Connectedness	Accptng Offer																							
	Requesting	•									•	•												
	Complying														•									
	Agreeing																							
	Status Bestwl					•				•			•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Informing			•		•			•	•			•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Clarifying																							
	Critiquing																							
	Offrng/suppt																							
	Inviting							•																
Access	Closing																							•
	Naming						•					•												
	Transitioning																							
	Initiating																							
Form	Response -																							
	Response - 0		•	•																				
	Response +					•									•									
	Statement				•				•	•				•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Question	•					•	•			•	•	•											
Source																								
	Debra	•			•																			
	Ruth		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Jess													•										
	Transcript Line																							

Transcript ID: 3/7 (Bl.1, T.U. #2)

Figure 4.4: Ownership and Social Functions

Transcript 4.2 (3/7, Bl.1, T.U.#2)

52 [Debra comes over to Ruth]

53 Ruth [to Debra]: Okay,

54 you can be two [pointing to fairy],

55 Jess's one.

56 You're two,

57 Jess's one.

58 I'm four.

59 Nobody can go past the end of four.

60 I'm four.

Each of Ruth's six statements are assertively decisive. She was telling the others exactly how her characters would be portrayed.

Although the coding of "Status Bestowal," which I will discuss in section C.1.3., does not often occur in the concentration visible on the Figure 4.4 coding sheet, the combination of discussion about content and the use of informative statements or responses is frequently seen throughout the data sheets. A count of such correspondences involving only the first Message Units of coded transcript for each of the three transcribed sessions (about 1/4 of the total) showed a total of 130 such occurrences; 29 in the December session, 66 in March, and 35 in April. The finding of the relationship between content discussions and informative, decisive statements suggests that the girls had a strong sense of ownership over the content of their stories. It seemed to be an assumed right among the girls that an author could and should be the one who ultimately makes the decisions about content. This right was explicitly stated more than once. Three examples follow.

1) After a lengthy discussion about who should take what position in Debra's story:

Jess: I know why Debra always gets to be the littlest [in her story].

Ruth [smiling and shrugging]: Yeah, cuz it's *her* story!

The smile and shrug that accompanied her comment suggested that such a right was self-evident.

2) After a similar controversy:

Debra: But Jess, I asked first.

Jess: [slaps book open and snatches cap off marker]: It's my book. . . .

3) After Ruth objected to the way she was portrayed in Debra's story, and Debra went into a long elaboration of how the story would proceed:

Debra [finishing up the episode]: . . . the witch would capture you . . . .

Ruth: Nooo

Debra: and put a spell. That's the story.

Following are two additional examples of ways in which the right to story ownership seemed to be supported by the data.

a. Assuming Permission to Include Friends as Characters

In my discussion of the first finding, "Relationships Between Story Construction and Inclusion of Friend-Characters," I noted that the girls not only invited each other to be in their stories, but they also announced who would be whom in their stories. (Refer to section 1.a, p. 86) Stating who would be which character was a significantly more frequent occurrence than

including friends by invitation. Compared to the 29 occurrences of inclusion by invitation, there were 87 occurrences of including others by using a statement that informed rather than gave a choice, 17 in the December session, 52 in March, and 18 in April. Ruth's statements in lines 54-60 (p. 93) are typical of these announcements of inclusion.

To show some variation in the way the finding may be viewed, I will add interpretive detail to the finding by using another sample from the transcripts. The following message units are extracted from a transcript block from the December session.

Transcript 4.3 (12/13, Bl.3, T.U.#2)

402 Debra: [working on her 3rd page now]:

403 Cindy this is you.

.....

406 Debra: Cindy you're gonna be . . . .

.....

426 Debra: Cindy you have blue eyes

427 so I need blue.

.....

437 Jess: I'm making blonde hair.

438 Debra [looking down at her own drawing]: That's Cindy.

439 Jess: I'm making Ruth with blonde hair.

440 Ruth: You mean . . .

441 that's me?

442 Now I'm gonna make me.

443 Jess: uh huh.

The message units expressed by Debra in these excerpts stood alone amongst other bits of conversation that were going on around her. Debra not only announced that the picture she was drawing would be Cindy (lines 403 and 438), but that Cindy would have blue eyes (line 426), rather than asking her if she would like to choose her eye color, the way Ruth had done in Transcript 4.1, p. 85. (In reality, Cindy *does* have blue eyes.) She did not receive any feedback, either verbal or non-verbal, in response to her statements. It is significant that no one responded because it suggests that including others and assigning characteristics to them without receiving permission is acceptable.

Jess's statement in line 437 that she was making blonde hair, and her assignment of the blonde hair to Ruth in line 439, confirmed this right of an author to simply inform or announce attributes of friend-characters. Furthermore, it confirmed the author's right to fictionalize characters, since Ruth is a brunette. Since Ruth didn't object, but went on to talk about her own story, the right was legitimized. The frequency of assertions of friend-inclusion over the frequency of invitations to be included seemed to reinforce the strong sense the girls had that what they produced belonged to them. An invitation gives the invitee the opportunity to turn down the offer more easily and with less chance of confrontation than a statement. A statement of inclusion is more like an appropriation of the other person's persona. However, while it may be a less considerate form, it's use can also imply an assumption of closeness, as though she might be saying, "I feel I know you well enough that I can use you without permission. And you know me well enough to trust that I won't abuse that privilege."

It could be argued that the fact that the girls extended themselves to *inform* their friends that they were being included was an indirect form of

request. That is, if an author was truly free to use a friend as a character, she wouldn't need to say anything; she could simply do it. By informing others of their actions and intentions, they could be testing the response; if there was no objection, then consent could be assumed. As I will show in b., below, and in the Identity section, an elaboration of the findings in this section suggests that inclusion of others as characters in the stories is not always a simple matter of declaring that inclusion since such declarations can be disputed.

The finding, then, is that the girls in this group use informing statements as their most frequent means of letting their friends know that they are, or will be, including them in their stories. Such assertions seem to reflect the girls' sense of authority over their own work; announcing ownership of the content of their stories seems to be an important part of their interactions as they blend their social interactions with their story-constructions.

b. Ownership of Character Representation

In the transcript explicated in the introduction to section C.1. (Transcript 4.1, p. 85), Ruth showed that she could allow Jess a say in what color she might be portrayed in Ruth's story ("What color do you want to be?" line 228). In that particular case, the issue became lost in a discussion of who was going to be in the story, and was not revived in the form of a choice during the remainder of the Activity Period. Ruth simply decorated her Jess-character according to her own taste. In many segments, as noted in section 2.a., "Assuming Permission to Include Friends as Characters," the authors told their friends how they would be portrayed and, as with Jess and Ruth (Transcript 4.1, p. 85, mentioned above), their decisions were accepted. However, in the previous section I noted that announcing inclusion of

friends-as-characters was not entirely under the authority of the author. For example, in Transcript 4.1 from the introduction to section C.1. (p. 85), Debra, Jess, and Cindy loaned their personas to Ruth from a vantage point of authority—granting permission or announcing a desire to be included. This section will show that attributes of character-friends can become a matter of concern to the owner of the persona, a matter for negotiation, sometimes even contention.

The coding category that makes provision for character rights is "Imposing/Directing." Figure 4.5, the coding sheet which accompanies the transcript I will explicate in this section, shows several message units coded in the "Imposing/Directing" category between lines 352 and 370.

Since this category was used to note incidences of assertiveness by a group member toward others' ideas and activities as well as with respect to others' story content, I checked the occurrences of "Imposing/Directing" against the transcripts themselves, and only counted message units where the speaker claimed authority over an attribute of the character that represented her in the story. Throughout the three transcripts, there were 37 occurrences of "Imposing/Directing" message units in which a participant (group member whose persona is being used) claimed ownership of an attribute of her self-character in another's story, 12 in the December session, 19 in March, and six in April. The occurrences are regular enough throughout the year to indicate that the girls felt they had a right to say how they would be represented.

		351	352	353	354	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	367	368	369	370	373	374	375	376	378	381	383
Writing	Who-b-whom	•																							
	Chr chrstcs	•	•	•	•		•			•		•	•	•						•		•			
	"est" value																								
	Process					•		•	•		•	•			•				•		•			•	•
	Content	•	•	•	•		•			•		•	•	•						•		•			
Ties																									
	R - TX - R																			•		•			
	J - TX - D		•		•		•			•		•		•											
	D - TX - D	•		•									•		•										
Chnge	Revising											•													
	Negotiating					•																			
Separateness	Ignoring																								
	Denying		•		•											•	•	•							
	Criticizing																								
	Refsl to Prtcp																								
	Status Assumptn																								
	Imposng/Drctng		•		•		•	•		•	•	•						•							
	Holding Floor								•						•				•		•			•	
	Eval/Jdgng															•	•						•		
	Decidng/Cntrll	•		•																					
Connectedness	Accptng Offer																								
	Requesting					•							•												•
	Complying																								
	Agreeing																								
	Status Bestwl																			•		•			
	Informing	•	•	•	•		•			•	•			•		•	•	•					•		
	Clarifying													•											
	Critiquing																								
	Offrng/suppt																								
	Inviting																			•		•			
Access	Closing																						•		
	Naming																		•		•			•	
	Transitioning								•																
	Initiating																		•						
Form	Response -		•		•													•							
	Response - 0			•		•		•				•			•										
	Response +													•											•
	Statement	•							•	•	•					•	•		•		•		•	•	
	Question						•							*						*		*			
Source																									
	Ruth																		•	•	•	•		•	
	Jess		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•				•					•		•
	Debra	•		•									•		•	•	•								
	Transcript Line																								

Transcript ID: 12/13 (Bl.2, T.U. #9)

Figure 4.5: Ownership of Character Representation

Explication of the following topic unit, coded above in Figure 4.5, will show how Debra's ownership of her story could be eroded by the sense of ownership Jess had over the Jess-character Debra has incorporated into her story. Debra declared that her Jess-character would have the shortest hair, probably because Jess, in real life, *did* have the shortest hair of the three girls. Jess objected to this portrayal of herself.

Transcript 4.4 (12/13, Bl.2, T.U.#9)

350 Debra [looking up at Jess]:

351 But you're the fairy with the shortest hair.

352 Jess: No uh uh.

353 [Debra nods, yes]

354 Jess: No I'm not because . . .

355 [looks at Ruth, who has long hair.]

356 Please . . .

357 I want my hair long.

358 [reaches over and takes Debra's marker from her]

359 All right,

360 I'll tell you how long it should be.

361 I'll make it.

362 [draws more hair on Debra's figure]

363 Debra: Is that how long your hair is?

364 Jess: Yeah.

365 [When she finishes, she has made almost waist-length
366 tresses on the drawing. Debra scrutinizes it]

367 Debra: That's . . .

368 It's longer . . .

369 Your hair's not that long.

370 Jess: It *is*.

371 [feels her hair, which is short, page-boy cut]

372 [Stephen has been watching this incident]

373 Ruth: Jess

374 how big do you wanna be?

375 Jess,

376 what age do you wanna be?

377 [Jess is still feeling her hair and looking at Debra.]

378 Jess: My hair's almost as long as yours is.

379 [Debra's hair is shoulder-length.]

380 Ruth [tapping Jess on the shoulder]:

381 Jesssssss!

382 Jess [quickly leaning over to Ruth]:

383 What!

[This interruption takes Jess away from the issue of her hair and she doesn't return to it.]

In this topic unit, Debra told Jess that she would have short hair in her story, rather than asking her if she wanted a choice (line 351). Jess refused outright to accept Debra's decision (line 352). Debra, perhaps trying to maintain ownership of her story, didn't accept Jess's refusal (head nod, line 353). Between lines 354 and 357, Jess struggled with what may have been her conflict over her own image of herself and the protocol that Debra be allowed to make the decision. It appears on the videotape that, in the way she looked

up at Ruth, who was sitting nearby, she was trying to establish that she did have long hair, but realized it was not as long as Ruth's. When she discovered this, it became a matter of negotiation, indicated by her switch from telling ("No I'm not because . . . " line 354) to pleading ("Please . . . ") in line 356. She then explained to Debra that she wanted her hair long. Here she simultaneously let Debra know that what goes into a story doesn't have to be fact, while at the same time projecting an image of herself as she would have *liked* to be, but wasn't. She was, in effect, saying, "This is how I want to be represented even though it isn't how I really am." It showed her awareness of how storytelling can be used as a vehicle to "change history," so-to-speak.

An interesting incident took place next. In line 358, Jess took Debra's marker from her and then, after announcing her intent ("I'll tell you how long it should be. / I'll make it." [lines 360-361]), she drew extra hair on Debra's figure. Although Jess did write or draw on Debra's work occasionally, usually in a helping capacity, she was particularly aggressive this time. With this act, she not only took ownership of Debra's story verbally, but physically as well. At no point did Debra object to this dominance of her work, either during the interchange or at a later time in the Activity Period. Sometimes children will cross out such intrusions into their work, but she left the drawing as Jess modified it.

Although she didn't object to Jess' drawing on her work, Debra did, however, try one last time to object to Jess's claim to have long hair (lines 367-369). When Jess once again insisted in line 370 by saying, emphatically, "It *is*," Debra let the issue drop and returned to her own work. Jess had effectively asserted her ownership over the way in which she was going to be included as a character in Debra's story. The remainder of the transcript is included to show that Jess continued to puzzle the issue of her hair length even after

Debra had dropped the subject (lines 377-378) to such a degree that Ruth had to yell at her to get her attention.

As an example of the findings in the data, this topic unit shows that it is a right of one who is being included as a story character to ask for adjustment in *how she is used* if she doesn't like the way she has been represented. In some relationships, the person whose persona is being leant may be able to negotiate compromises in how she is represented, and in others she may be able to take full ownership of her characterization, as was the case with Jess and Debra here. In any case, when ownership of story is also blended with using friends as characters—in the presence of those friends—then ownership of story becomes more complex. To accept an invitation to be included in someone's story is to accept a 'piece' of that story—to have an interest or share in it. If a participant agreed to be in an author's story, then part of the author's story belonged to the participant because it was the participant's persona that was on loan and her self-image that was at stake. Conversely, the participant was allowing a part of herself to come under the author's direction; she was allowing something of herself to belong to another. Similarly, by bringing a participant into her story, the author accepted that she had given a part of her story away. She also accepted the responsibility of 'taking care of' her friend who was then in her power as the story writer.

In section C.3., I will show how issues of character ownership rights tie in with issues of status.

c. Closing: Bringing the Story Home

Another finding related to ownership has to do with who has the last say in a discussion about an author's story. On both the Figure 4.3 coding

sheet used to illustrate the first finding (see p. 84) and the Figure 4.4 coding sheet used at the beginning of this section on ownership (p. 91), it can be seen that the person whose story was under discussion during the topic unit was the person who made the remark that closed the conversation about the story. In the case of these two topic units, the author was, coincidentally, Ruth. In an examination of the coded topic units for all three transcripts, I found 32 conversations within 30 topic units that showed clear endings to conversations centered around one person's story. That is, they were segments of conversation that weren't ended by transitions or interruptions. A tabulation of the number of conversations that were closed by the author of the story under discussion showed that 25 of the conversations were closed by the author and seven were closed by another member of the group. This finding suggests that part of maintaining control over one's story is to "have the last word" when that story is a matter of public discussion. Authorship seemed to carry with it the right to decide how the social exchange would end.

In summary, the data show a) a relationship between story content and the use of informative statements by the author about her intentions for her story, b) a relationship between informative statements and an author's inclusion of others as characters in her stories, c) a relationship between directive statements by a participant with regard to how the character representing her will be portrayed, and d) a relationship between who closes a conversation about a story and the person who authored the story under discussion. These four sets of findings seem to support the concept that among these girls, maintaining a sense of ownership over their stories and their personas when included as part of a story was a significant factor in their social interactions as they wrote.

3. Relationship Between Story Construction and Personal Status

In the early stages of developing the coding categories, I had noticed that for both authors and participants (those being included as friend-characters), certain character attributes seemed to be in demand. One of the indicators that these attributes were important to the participants was that the participants requested the author to give them particular attributes in her story. Following are examples of such requests, taken from the data:

"Can I be a little sister?"

"Can I be four?"

"Can I be small, too, Ruth?"

Occasionally the interest in an attribute would come in the form of an inquiry about how an author had already represented a friend-character, for example:

"Am I old?"

"And how big am I gonna be?"

Both authors and friends also made assertions about the attributes they intended to assign to their self-character, or that they wanted assigned to the character that represented them in someone else's story. These assertions were coded as "Statements" under "Form" and "Informing" under "Connectedness." Authors would make such statements as:

"I'm colorful / but nobody else is."

"But I'm gonna be beautiful."

"I love when I get to be the littlest in my story."

"I'm the littlest and you're the second."

Examples of participant statements took the form of expressions of desire and, occasionally, of outright assertions of how they would be represented in an author's story.

"I wanna be the tiniest, too."

"I wanna be two."

"I'm the littlest sister [in your play]."

"We're both the same age [in your play]."

As evidence accumulated about the girls' interest in being represented in certain ways, I analyzed the nature of the requests and statements, and found that the desirable traits had to do with age, color, beauty, and position in the story relative to the author's own position in the story (e.g., "You're the littlest and I'm secondest," or, "I'm in the middle.") and usually being either superior ("prettier, "younger," etc.) or superlative ("beautifulest," "babiest," "littlest," or, sometimes, "oldest," etc.). The emphasis on comparative values indicated that status was involved, since status by definition involves comparative rank or privilege. Since requests and statements such as these seemed to be a regular part of the girls' conversations, I designated coding categories to mark the message units that included references to the desirable traits. The origin of the categories labelled "Status Bestowal," "Status Assumption," and " 'est' value" were the result of this informal analysis. (Refer to the blank coding sheet in Figure 4.2, p. 81 for placement of the categories in the matrix.) When an author offered or announced an attribute or position involving either high or low status to a friend, it was coded as "Status Bestowal." (An example of such coding was visible in lines 54-60 of Figure 4.4 (p. 91) in the previous discussion of ownership.) When a friend of the author announced, unsolicited or uninvited, a desire for a status position or attribute ("I wanna be the littlest [in your story]"), or when she simply claimed such an attribute or position ("I'll be two [in your story]"), or when the author herself claimed a position of status for her self-character ("I'm the colorfulest [in my story].") the message unit was coded as "Status Assumption." If the message unit included an adjective in its comparative or

superlative form ("younger," "prettiest"), it was coded in the " 'est' value column" of the "Writing" section. All three of these categories were sub-sets of "Character Characteristics."

I tabulated the occurrences of each of these categories to see if the frequency gave an indication of the importance of status issues to the children, and if their interest persisted throughout the year. A total of 304 message units had to do with Character Characteristics in some way. Of these 304, 85 (28%) were incidences of Status Bestowal. Fifty of the 304 (16%) were incidences of Status Assumption. Together, the two categories that involve giving or taking status positions of characteristics came to approximately 44%. (There is a small amount of overlap in the figures because a few message units both bestowed and assumed status. For example, "Me and Jess are both the littlest" bestows status on Jess and assumes status by the speaker.) Of the 304 total message units dealing with character characteristics, 59 message units (19%) included comparative or superlative words to describe the character. These figures suggest that how a character is represented, and the status that that representation signifies are important to the girls in the social construction of their stories.

In the next two sections, I will explicate two topic units in which issues involving status were central to the girls' discussion. These events show relationships between the assignation of attributes to friend-characters and the girls' social standing with each other. The first, Negotiating for a Status Position, is related to, and leads into, the second, Refusal to Accept a Low Status Position. Although both events were unique, they are important as illustrations of how much the issue of status in the construction of stories influenced and was influenced by the girls' social relationships.

a. Negotiating for a Status Position

Figure 4.6 shows the coding sheets for the first topic unit I will discuss. The coding sheet shows a steady occurrence of message units that deal with Character Characteristics throughout most of the unit, particularly between lines 85 and 122. This indicates that the ways story-characters were being represented was the main topic of discussion. There were six occurrences of Status Bestowal during the unit (lines 94, 99, 103, 109, 120, and 127) which are located at relatively regular intervals throughout the unit. There were two occurrences of Status Assumption, and one occurrence of "-est value," which the transcript will show was actually part of a short interval of conversation that was slightly off the main topic. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of this coding sheet is the large number of message units coded as "Negotiating." "Negotiating," which was rare in the data, is defined in APPENDIX C as "The use of bargaining by offering or pledging incentives or alternatives to get another to accept a position or characteristic, or convince him/her to look a the situation differently." An explication of the transcript will show that the combination of "Negotiation" and a focus on "Character Characteristics" with a number of occurrences of "Status Bestowal" reveals the importance of status as part of this group's social writing process.

Some background information will be helpful in setting the scene for reading the transcript. The topic unit is the fifth topic unit of the Activity Period. Debra had negotiated with Ruth in a previous topic unit to be the littlest character in Ruth's play, but had lost the place to Jess. Ruth had allowed Debra to be two, the second littlest. Debra had seemed satisfied with this settlement. Just before this segment Debra had established status positions for herself and Jess in her own play: she and Jess would both be zero

		83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	101	102	103	105	106	108
Writing	Who-b-whom	•	•	•		•																		
	Chr chrstcs			•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•
	"est" value																							
	Process							•		•				•					•				•	
	Content	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•		•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•
Ties	R – TX – D	•			•									•					•					
	D – TX – D		•	•		•					•	•	•				•	•						
	D – TX – R							•		•						•								
	J – TX – R																					•		
	R – TX – R						•		•						•					•	•			•
Chnge	Revising												•					•						
	Negotiating			•			•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
Separateness	Ignoring																							
	Denying															•								•
	Criticizing				•																			
	Refsl to Prtcp																							
	Status Assumptn					•																		
	Imposng/Drctng																					•		
	Holding Floor									•				•					•				•	
	Eval/Jdgng																							
	Decidng/Cntrll		•			•	•		•		•		•		•						•			
Connectedness	Accptng Offer																							
	Requesting	•			•			•																
	Complying		•																					
	Agreeing																							
	Status Bestwl												•					•			•			
	Informing		•	•		•	•		•						•						•	•		
	Clarifying					•																		
	Critiquing																							
	Offrng/suppt										•	•	•				•	•						
	Inviting											•	•				•	•		•				
Access	Closing																							
	Naming																							
	Transitioning																							
	Initiating	•																						
Form	Response -				•											•								•
	Response - 0			•		•								•					•			•	•	
	Response +		•							•	•													
	Statement						•		•						•						•			
	Question	•			•			•				•	•				•	•		•				
Source																								
	Debra		•	•		•		•		•	•	•	•			•	•	•					•	
	Ruth	•			•		•		•					•	•				•	•	•			•
	Jess																					•		
	Transcript Line																							

Transcript ID: 3/7 (Bl.1, T.U. #5) page 1

Figure 4.6: Negotiating for a Status Position

Continued next page

		109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133
Writing	Who-b-whom					•	•																		
	Chr chrstcs	•			•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•					•					•	
	"est" value				•																				
	Process		•	•							•		•		•	•				•	•				
	Content	•			•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•			•	•	•			•	•	•	•
Ties	R – TX – D													•											•
	D – TX – D											•					•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
	D – TX – R								•	•															
	J – TX – R			•			•																		
	R – TX – R	•	•		•	•		•																	
Chnge	Revising											•				•									
	Negotiating							•				•		•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Separateness	Ignoring																								
	Denying																								
	Criticizing																								
	Refsl to Prtcp																								
	Status Assumptn								•																
	Imposng/Drctng								•																
	Holding Floor										•		•		•	•	•	•		•	•				
	Eval/Jdgng																								
	Decidng/Cntrll	•								•									•			•		•	
Connectedness	Accptng Offer													•											•
	Requesting		•					•															•		
	Complying																								
	Agreeing			•		•																			
	Status Bestwl	•										•							•						
	Informing	•			•		•		•	•							•		•			•		•	
	Clarifying																								
	Critiquing																								
	Offrng/suppt																								
	Inviting											•												•	
Access	Closing																								•
	Naming												•			•									
	Transitioning							•																	
	Initiating																								
Form	Response -																								
	Response - 0															•									
	Response +			•		•																			•
	Statement	•			•		•		•	•	•			•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
	Question		•					•				•	•										•		
Source																									
	Debra							•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
	Ruth	•	•		•									•											•
	Jess			•		•	•																		
	Transcript Line																								

Transcript ID: 3/7 (Bl.1, T.U. #5) page 2

Figure 4.6 continued

years old, holding the youngest roles together. This topic unit opened with Ruth asking to have a part in Debra's play.

Transcript 4.5 (3/7, Bl.1, T.U.#5)

83	Ruth:	Can I be in your play?
84	Debra:	Yes,
85		but you have to be the big sister if you want in the play
86	Ruth:	Whyyyyy?
87	Debra:	Because Jess and me already picked them.
88	Ruth:	Then you have to be three in my play.
89	Debra:	What?
90	Ruth:	Then you hafta be three in my play.
91	Debra:	Okay.
92		[pointing to Ruth] You'll be . . .
93		How bout you'll be . . . .
94		eight?
95	Ruth:	Okay.
96		And you'll be three in my play.
97	Debra:	No. (?)
98		How bout . . .
99		you wanna be four?
100	[inviting facial expression]	
101	Ruth:	Okay.
102		How bout . . . . {not clear}
103		You're gonna be three.

104 [Jess watching exchange]

105 Jess: two.

106 Debra: Okay but I . . .

107 Ruth [interrupting]:

108 No,

109 you're one,

110 remember?

111 [Jess nods].

112 Ruth: You wanted to be the littlest.

113 Jess: Yeah,

114 I'm one.

115 Debra: Could I . . .

116 Then I'll be two.

117 That's big.

118 [pause as Debra looks at Ruth]

119 Okay.

120 you wanna be three,

121 Ruth?

122 Ruth: Yes.

123 Debra: Okay,

124 but Ruth,

125 you're gonna . . .

126 Because you . . .

127 Pretend you were really little,

128 but,

129 um,

130 but you really took care of us,

131 right?

132 Because we're gonna be littler than you.

133 Ruth: Okay.

In a customary manner, Ruth asked to be in Debra's play. By asking to be involved, she was expressing a willingness to lend her name and persona to Debra with less obligation on Debra's part to consider how she is represented than if she were to have demanded or announced her desire to participate (e.g., if she had said, "I wanna be in your play, too . . . ."). That is, a request to be included could be interpreted as less aggressive—more polite—than a statement of wanting to be included. A request highlights a respect for the author's ownership and for the fact that inclusion is a privilege.

However, Debra didn't handle Ruth's request as politely as it was made: she agreed to include her, but immediately qualified the acceptance by relegating Ruth to 'big sister' status (line 85). Although Ruth usually preferred to be an older character in the stories, including her own, she did not receive Debra's bestowal of status well, evidenced by her disappointed, "Whyyyyy" (line 86). Debra's intonation and directive sentence construction may have sent a signal to Ruth that she was being slighted by being given that position in the story, thereby making it unacceptable to Ruth. As well, Ruth's polite request was not repaid with a similarly polite response. Although Debra responded to Ruth's request for an explanation with an irrefutably logical reason for her decision ("Because Jess and me already picked them," line 87), she didn't soften it with any politeness signals or phraseology that would help make it more palatable for Ruth.

Ruth, perhaps hesitating to dispute Debra's decision-making rights over her story, turned to her own story for leverage over Debra. Using the same directive construction Debra had just used (" . . . . you have to be . . . ." in line 85), Ruth announced in a firm tone that she was changing Debra's age to three, a year older than they had agreed upon earlier. When Debra didn't hear clearly and asked, "What?" (line 89), Ruth had an opportunity to change her mind or soften her tone, but she maintained her stance as she repeated the dictum. Although she was aware that she didn't have a lot of power over Debra's story, she could alter her own, and Debra's position in it. Knowing how much Debra wanted to be 'little' in the stories the girls wrote, she saw an opportunity to use the information as a lever to get Debra to give her a better position in her story, as well as to reprimand her, perhaps, for being impolite. At some point, Ruth seemed to have discovered the art of manipulation and Debra was susceptible to it. Debra's "Okay" (line 91) was not intoned to signal acceptance of Ruth's decision, but to signal a change of direction in the conversation. Using the diversionary tactic of changing from relative status to a specific age ("eight?" line 94), Debra made an offering to Ruth. In her lead-in to the offer, her intonation softened and she changed a directive statement midstream ("You'll be . . . ," line 92) to use of "How bout . . . " (line 93), an indication that she was willing to negotiate rather than impose.

But Ruth was not ready to conclude the negotiation yet. Her "Okay" (line 95), like Debra's, did not mean she accepted Debra's proposal. She may not have been happy with the age she has been offered (eight), or she may not have been satisfied that Debra's softening of approach was sufficient to assuage her hurt. Whatever her reason, she held fast to her decision to make Debra three in her story by repeating, in line 96, her statement that Debra would be three in her play.

The intonation of Debra's 'No,' in line 97, seemed to indicate that it was more a signal for continuance than a rejection of Ruth's decision, although her choice of that word did signal that it wasn't what she wanted. She seemed to be signalling that she wanted negotiations to remain open. This was confirmed by her repeat of "How 'bout . . . " (line 98) followed by a true invitation, "you wanna be four?" (line 99) which was reinforced by a very inviting, eyebrows-raised expression, directed openly toward Ruth. Clearly Ruth had succeeded in changing Debra's approach from one of somewhat aggressive assertiveness to one of conciliation.

Although Ruth continued to stick to her position in lines 101-103, her "How bout . . . ." (followed by something inaudible) indicated a softening of her position, a willingness that she might have been ready to give a little in the negotiation.

At that point Jess, who had been watching the interaction, came into the discussion with her emphatic, "*two.*" It is most likely that she was referring back to the original agreement between Ruth and Debra, that Debra would be two in the story. It may be, too, that she sensed Ruth was weakening and she saw that moment as the time to intervene on Debra's behalf. In spite of her sometimes aggressive assumption of the leadership role, she seemed to have a sense of social balance, and often found a diplomatic way to come to the aid of those who were 'losing' an argument. At this point the discussion became somewhat confused. It is hard to tell who Debra was responding to in line 106, and Ruth's interruption (lines 108-110), clearly in response to Jess, showed that Ruth thought Jess was asking to have *Jess's* age be two. Jess, perhaps afraid of losing her status, didn't try to straighten out the misunderstanding, but simply reaffirmed Ruth's clarification ("Yeah / I'm

one," lines 113-114). She then dropped out of the conversation by going back to her drawing.

Debra re-opened the negotiation over her status in Ruth's story, first by starting to ask to be two (line 115), then, encouraged perhaps by Jess's having gone to bat for her, trying a more assertive strategy by *stating* she would be two (line 116). Her next message unit, "That's big," may have been an effort to convince Ruth that being two was not such a big concession over being three, since it was still big compared to being a real baby. That is, by letting her be two, Ruth still wasn't conceding her the coveted baby status. But Ruth didn't respond to Debra, so Debra, using her change-of-direction signal ("Okay," line 119), returned to the subject of her own story, and the contentious issue of Ruth's status in it. She made another offer to Ruth, again in the form of an invitation, to be three, and gave her additional recognition by addressing her by name ("You wanna be three / Ruth?" lines 120-121). Finally Ruth accepted this position, apparently satisfied that Debra had recognized her as sufficiently important in terms of the status position she granted her in her story.

Debra, however, was not quite satisfied. The status issue was resolved and she had, by implication, retained her position in Ruth's story, but her plans for the content of her own story seemed to be thrown awry. She wanted a character that would be a caretaker for herself and her Jess-character, but a three-year-old seemed rather young in her eyes for that role. Furthermore, she had lost ownership of her story through all the negotiating. To regain ownership and to re-establish her story structure, she spent ten message units (lines 123-132) assuring Ruth that she would retain her status of being little, while still fulfilling her needed role in the story as a caretaker. By this time Debra was approaching Ruth in a much more tentative tone than she did at the beginning of the conversation. She embedded signals of hesitancy rather

than bluntly stating what had to be, and she asked for approval of her idea ("right?" line 132). She did, however, slip in a final statement that reiterated her own and Jess's continued position in the top status slot. Ruth closed the unit by agreeing to this final arrangement, seemingly satisfied that she had made her point.

It is interesting that Ruth spent the duration of 36 message units working to become a younger character in Debra's story when she generally preferred to be an older character. It suggests that her unconscious strategy was to meet Debra on Debra's own ground, to establish herself as a status-deserving member of the group *in Debra's terms* rather than in her own. Ruth knew that Debra valued being young and that by making Ruth older in her story, Debra was giving Ruth a lower status position. In other words, Debra's positioning of Ruth in her story was her way of letting Ruth know that she was of a lower status in Debra's eyes than either Jess or herself. Ruth seemed determined to readjust Debra's image of her by manipulating a status position of more account. But to be meaningful to Debra, Ruth had to ask for an age that would be desirable to Debra rather than to herself. When Ruth had worked the character-age down from a nebulous "older sister," to eight, to four, and finally to three, she seemed satisfied that she had established her importance sufficiently in Debra's eyes that Debra would no longer take her so for granted.

The interviews with Jess and Debra shed some light on what Debra was trying to achieve with her story here. They both addressed their reasons for wanting to be the "littlest."

MYP: You like to put your friends in your stories, don't you?

Debra: Yeah. And they like to go in mine sometimes.

MYP: How come?

Debra: Well . . . because . . . well . . . Jess likes how I draw sometimes, and, uh, I offered her if she wants to be littlest and she said, "Yes!"

MYP: Is it better . . . is it more fun to be the littlest or the biggest?

Debra: It's more fun to be the littlest.

MYP: How come?

Debra: Well because you don't like, um, have to do working stuff.

MYP: Oh . . . If you're the littlest you don't have to do work.

Debra: Yeah.

MYP: So if you're bigger you have to help out?

Debra: Yeah.

MYP: Okay. So that's why you like to be the littlest in the stories?

Debra: Yeah.

MYP: Are there any other reasons for being the littlest in the story?

Debra: Well, Jess likes to be the littlest in my story because she, uh, [lots of hesitations in articulating what she wants to say] because I go around in the fun places in the story . . . I go around, but I always carry her in my arms and she likes it when I, like, I have a blanket.

For Debra, being the littlest meant being in a position where one doesn't have to do any work, and one can be taken care of. Although it is

outside the scope of this study, the concept of being taken care of could be viewed as a female stereotype, here being expressed by a five-year-old. The possibility makes it worthy of further examination in future research.

Jess, in her interview, gave her reason for being the littlest:

Jess Interview, May 16

MYP: Do they [the other girls] want to be the baby most of the time or do they want to be the biggest?

Jess: The baby.

MYP: How come, I wondered?

Jess: I don't know. They just like to be the baby because . . . because my mom said that littler kids wanted to be bigger kids and bigger kids wanted to be littler kids.

MYP: [chuckle] so because you're bigger kids you want to be littler?

Jess: And when I was little I wanted to be bigger.

Jess's reason comes from home and may not be completely comprehensible to her, but it shows how children can incorporate 'the common wisdom' into their everyday lives and how it can influence their activities, in this case Jess's proclivity toward being 'the littlest.' A further reinforcement for Jess may have been that her parents had told her in the fall they would be adopting a baby and throughout the year she had been anticipating the event, which didn't actually occur until April.

Regardless of the true reasons for their interest in being "the littlest," in this incident it seemed important to Debra that she have a character in her story whom she felt would be old enough to be a caretaker. Because of the *social* exchange she had with Ruth, her concept of caretaker-suitability had to

be modified in her story, evidenced by her final explanation that even though Ruth was little, she was still big enough to take care of her Jess-character and her self-character. Social interaction at the writing table seemed to have affected Debra's story construct.

This topic unit shows that status was important to the girls and that they could use the practice of including themselves and each other in their stories to try to assert or negotiate their status in their real-life social world. They used negotiation, and even power manipulations, to insist that they be acknowledged in a manner that suited their sense of position or rank in the group. Their efforts to assure that their status be preserved went so far as exercising their right to refuse to participate at all in another's story, as the next section shows.

b. Refusal to Accept an Inappropriate Status Position

As noted in the discussion of "Friends as Characters by Invitation" (section C.1.a., p. 86), by asking permission to include a friend in a story, there was an implication that a 'No' answer was a possibility. Coded in the matrix as "Refusal to Participate" (abbreviated "Refsl to Prtcp"), occurrences of a refusal to allow oneself to be named a character in another's story were very rare. There were only three occurrences, one in each of the three sessions, in which an assignment or invitation to participate was turned down. However, the incidents are important because of their connection, or potential connection, with issues of status, and because they may explain, in part, why the girls were sensitive to each other's wishes in how they represented each other in their stories. I will explore two of these incidents in terms of their connection with issues of status.

In the topic unit that follows, the refusal to participate did not occur because of an inappropriate offer of positioning or character attribute, because no such offer had been made when the invitation to participate was extended. It was the manner in which the conversation evolved after the refusal that suggested an association between refusal to participate and status.

Transcript 4.6 (3/7, Bl.1, T.U.#4)

69 Debra: Jess,

70 d'you wanna be in my play?

71 [Jess shakes head, no.]

72 Debra: D'you wanna be the littlest one or the biggest one?

73 [Jess's response neither visible or audible].

74 Debra: I'm gonna be the littlest but there's two just babies.

75 I'm gonna be one and you're gonna be one,

76 Okay?

77 Actually I'm gonna be zero months old.

78 D'you wanna be zero months old?

79 [Jess nods, yes.]

80 Debra: Okay.

Debra started out with one of the usual approaches, an invitation asking Jess if she would like to be in her play (line 69). But this time, Jess turned down the invitation by shaking her head. However, she didn't offer any reason for her refusal and Debra didn't accept it as final, evidenced by her persistence. But she didn't repeat the invitation or ask 'Why?' either. Instead she carried on with questions pertaining to character attributes, trying out several coveted incentives to gain Jess's participation. In line 72 she offered to

allow Jess to choose her size. This was a big concession given the importance, as noted, of the status value in the group of being "the littlest." The importance of this status position was demonstrated when Debra, without a clear response from Jess, withdrew the offer in line 74 by assuming this position for herself. However, she kept the carrot dangling by declaring that there would be two babies in the story and, in line 75, she granted Jess the status of being one of them. She was talking rapidly, typical of her conversational style, and didn't wait for Jess to respond to her "Okay?" in line 76, but went on to raise the status even higher by changing the age of the two babies from one to zero (line 77). When she repeated her invitation to Jess with the inclusion of the offering of this status position, Jess finally gave her permission with a nod (line 79). Debra then retrieved ownership of her story by confirming the deal with her "Okay."

That Debra was not surprised or offended by Jess's refusal to participate in her story suggests that the girls respected each other's ownership of their own personas and that refusal to participate was considered a right. However, considering the degree to which the children's social relationships were embedded in their story writing, a total refusal to participate could easily have been seen as a rather strong rejection of the writer as a member of the social group. Such a rejection without a good reason could seem offensive, even an insult. Debra's persistence suggests that, at least among friends, she believed that 'No' didn't necessarily mean an absolute 'No,' and her success in finally gaining consent justified her intuition. But Debra seemed to feel she had to work for Jess's acceptance, and she used status incentives as her tools. That this was her strategy, and that it was successful, reinforces the concept of the use of status incentives as bargaining tools that was seen in the previous section, where Ruth negotiated for a better "age" in Debra's story. In the event

above, Jess, consciously or not, upheld the importance of status by accepting Debra's invitation to be included after the position offered to her was at a high enough status level (that is, at a low enough age).

The next example is a much more blatant and deliberate example of refusal to participate that occurred late in April. It suggests more explicitly that refusal to participate in another's story could, indeed, be a powerful and controversial tool for assuring that one's status was properly acknowledged through the story construction process.

The day was Debra's birthday and in this classroom, those with birthdays received special privileges and honors. The following segment illustrates how Debra tested the extent to which being the birthday-girl gave her status higher than Jess, the generally acknowledged leader.

Jess had previously announced that there would be no small unicorns in her story and had just issued a general invitation to the whole group, which included Michelle and Tisha this time, to be the biggest, four-year-old unicorn in her story. (See APPENDIX B, Transcript for April, Block 3, Topic Unit #6 for full body of the conversation.) The position was bid for by Debra and Cindy as well as by Tisha, but granted to Tisha because, as Jess stated, "Tisha never gets to be in my stories." Debra then shifted attention to her own position in Jess's story:

Transcript 4.7 (4/2, Bl.3, T.U.#7)

358	Debra:	So how old will I be?
359	Jess:	You'll be thirteen.
360	Debra:	I'm not going to be thirteen.
361	Cindy:	Can I be three?

362 Jess: Sure.

363 Debra: Can I be . . .

364 can I be . . .

365 can I be . . .

366 can I be five?

367 Jess: Nnnno!

368 Debra: Then I'm not gonna be in anything.

369 I don't wanna be in anything.

370 Well actually I changed my mind . . .

371 actually I changed my mind.

372 I don't wanna be in your play today.

373 Michelle: Debra can be whoever she wants to . . .

374 and however old she wants to

375 because she's the birthday girl.

376 Debra [glancing quickly up at Jess]: Yeah.

377 Jess: You can't always do anything you want

378 unless she's the birthday girl!

379 Michelle: But she *is* the birthday girl.

380 Jess: Yeah but it's not fair to other people . . .

381 they . . .

382 they want to be somebody . . .

383 and then the other person says, 'No'

384 that's not very nice,

385 right, Cindy?

386 [looks to Cindy for reinforcement]

387 Cindy: Yeah.

388 Jess: Anyways, it's already hurting our feelings.

389 Michelle [interrupting Jess]:

390 Well, Debra's my friend.

391 Debra [looking down and drawing as she speaks]:

392 I'll never . . .

393 I won't be in your play.

394 [Jess stares out in front of her, as though thinking.]

395 Jess: That's not very nice,

396 Cindy,

397 is it?

398 [Cindy shakes head, no.]

399 [Interruption as Jill tells Debra to pick something of
400 hers up off the rug. This ends the issue.]

Debra started out (line 358) by asking Jess two questions in one: explicitly, how old the Debra-character in Jess's story would be, and thereby implicitly, what her status in the story would be. As I have shown, the age of a character also indicated her status. Jess's reply, therefore, that Debra would be thirteen (line 359) was a rather extraordinary insult. In fact, that was the oldest specific bestowed age for which I have a record at any time during the year. (Being given the character of 'mother,' without specifying her age, was not unusual, but that position seemed to hold compensatory status of its own. To be a mom was something of an honor, while just being thirteen, without any other qualifications, left the character at best without any rank whatever and at worst, at the bottom of the ranks.)

Debra reacted immediately and definitively: "I'm not going to be thirteen" (line 360). Cindy then asked if she could be three, and even though Jess had said there would be no unicorns under the age of four, she said, "Sure" to the request (line 362). It is possible that she was referring back to Cindy's earlier request to be a horse, which wouldn't necessarily fall under the same restriction, but her lack of qualification on that score, and the fact that she gave Cindy an age so much younger than Debra's only made the insult to Debra worse.

But Debra, usually anxious to be a part of Jess's stories, tried for a compromise, age five, the next age-slot above that given to Tisha. Jess, who was standing up, looking for a marker at the moment Debra asked, turned her whole body toward Debra and as she said "Nnnno!" she added emphasis by quickly bending her body toward and over Debra. It was an emphatic refusal. Debra then used five full-sentence message units to make it clear to Jess that she was refusing participation at all in her story. She even went to the length of explaining that she was withdrawing her earlier request to be in Jess's play (" . . . I changed my mind," line 370, repeated in line 371). The thoroughness of her withdrawal seemed to match the degree of insult she had been receiving from Jess.

At that point Michelle intervened. Michelle had entered the conversation on Debra's behalf earlier in the period by defending Debra's right to be the littlest in Debra's own story on the grounds that it was her birthday. She had established that being the birthday person carried privileges that could override other claims to status. Too, as I have noted elsewhere, Michelle was one of three contenders for the leadership of all the girls in the class and was a strong presence in any group. Thus, when she made her proclamations in lines 373-375 that, "Debra can be whoever she wants to . . .

/and however old she wants to/because she's the birthday girl," her words carried considerable weight in the conversation.

Debra, with her confirming "Yeah" (line 376), took hold of this support and, in looking at Jess as she did so, signaled that the ball was in Jess's court for the next comment. Jess's tone signalled considerable indignation as she argued that being the birthday girl didn't convey *that* much privilege (lines 377-378). In part she may have been protesting the use of the birthday privilege to claim ownership of her story.

Michelle either missed or ignored this implication and stuck to her assertion that Debra's status carried considerable power by repeating, with emphasis on 'is,' "But she *is* the birthday girl" (line 379). However, Michelle's intonation was softer as she said this, carrying a tone of doubt that her argument was as strong as her previous assertion indicated, and she didn't look up from her drawing as she spoke.

To continue the defense of her own argument, Jess moved away from the personal assault that seemed to be occurring and applied to a broader cultural principle, the issue of fairness (lines 380-386). Her argument seemed to be that by refusing to accept the characteristic assigned, others wouldn't get to be what they wanted to be. Her argument also seemed to contain an implicit protest against a person's right to refuse absolutely to be in another's story. Leveraged negotiation was one thing, but total withdrawal may have been quite another.

Perhaps feeling somewhat cornered, Jess then turned to Cindy for reinforcement. It is interesting that she chose Cindy rather than Tisha or Peter, who were also at the table. Cindy, like Michelle and Jess herself, assumed a position of leadership among the girls in some classroom and playground situations, frequently contending with Michelle when the two

were interacting. Though Cindy didn't become heavily involved in this debate, she gave Jess the support she was asking for with her "Yeah," in line 387. The approval seemed to encourage Jess, and, still looking at Cindy as she spoke, she added that " . . . it's already hurting our feelings" (line 388). Here she added another broader cultural principle to the fairness issue; the rule of not hurting other people's feelings. Being considerate of others was a frequent subject of discussion in the classroom, privately between the teachers and individual children, and publicly with the group as a whole. Jess's use of "our" instead of "my" added weight to her argument by drafting Cindy further into the alliance that backed up her arguments.

Michelle overspoke Jess's argument, probably indicating that she was responding to Jess's arguments about fairness and politeness in lines 380-384, by defending her position as Debra's friend (line 390). Her message here seemed to be that loyalty to a friend was at least as high or higher a principle that being considerate, and which would justify standing up for her even if her arguments for doing so were weak.

In spite of all her rhetoric, Jess had still not made any concessions to Debra with regard to Debra's status in her story. Unlike the leveraged negotiations between Debra and Ruth in the previously discussed transcript, Jess did not play the game properly by offering Debra a better position to entice her back to her story. So Debra, probably encouraged by Michelle's continued support, repeated again her refusal to participate in Jess's play (lines 392-393), and Jess was left to ponder her situation (line 394). With no other comments from the group, she simply returned to a rather weakly intoned reiteration of the politeness principle she had drawn upon in line 384, and again asked for Cindy's reinforcement. Cindy, busy with her drawing, supported her non-

verbally (line 398). At that point the issue was closed because of external events.

These events are useful in understanding some of the broader cultural norms that guided the girls in their interactions—particularly fairness, politeness, and loyalty. The first event showed how Ruth, a group member who often accepted a more passive and compliant position, could use the writing activity for social leverage to regain her position in the eyes of a fellow member. She was playing upon Debra's desire for having a status position in Ruth's story. The second event showed how even the strongest member of the group, Jess, could lose ownership of her story and her control over one of her followers when there was a shift in the status of that follower (being a birthday girl), albeit a temporary shift, and when she went too far in abusing a friend's standing in the group. It would seem that not even the powerful have complete control over the content of their stories when the stories are written in a social situation, and those who may appear weak gain strength when their status is sufficiently threatened. Jess had not played the game politely, nor had she properly honored Debra's loyalty to her, and Debra played all her cards to redress the injustice. The transcripts also suggest that there may have been an implicit norm with respect to the issue of refusal to participate: a refusal signalled a call for bestowing an acceptable level of status on the friend-character which was to be negotiated and established through compromise. Although absolute refusal was a major affront, refusal to grant a decent level of status was a greater affront and would not be actively supported by all members of the group.

Explication of these events in terms of their connection with issues of status shows that respect for status in social interactions was important to these girls. Proper representation in terms of observation of rank could be

transferred to the story construction process; writing became a medium for negotiating—even fighting for—personally acceptable social positions.

4. Summary of Section C

In this section I have discussed findings related to writing as a social process. The data showed that the social lives of this particular group of girls were enacted in their writing activity through the use of their own and their friends' personas as the characters in their fictionalized stories. Findings related to relationships between social functions and the use of selves and friends in the construction of stories are summarized below.

a) Inclusion of each other as characters took place through the use of the conversational strategies of invitations by the author to be included, authors' announcements of inclusion, and requests, expressions of desire, and announcements of inclusion by participants.

b) A high frequency of occurrences of discussion of character attributes showed that the ways in which friend-characters were represented in the stories was an important part of the social writing activity.

c) The girls established authority over their work through the use of decisive, informative statements announcing their actions and intentions regarding their work, as well as through claiming the "last word" in closing conversations about their own stories. An author's right to make decisions about her work was not only implicit in the language forms used to talk about content, but was also occasionally explicitly stated by the girls.

d) The girls indicated the desirability of certain character attributes such as size or age and clothing color by frequently requesting or assigning them to their friend-characters. By bestowing or claiming the right to the use of the desirable characteristics, the characteristics were endowed with status value, thereby becoming currency for use in bargaining and social manipulation.

The findings from this section will constitute a foundation for the discussion in the next section, "Identity and the Balance Between Separateness and Connectedness."

D. Identity and the Balance Between Separateness and Connectedness

In Chapter II I addressed the issue of children's identity with respect to their school learning experiences, particularly in relation to their development as writers. I defined "Identity" as two-sided, involving, on the one hand, a need to be independent, separate, distinct, or competent in one's own right, and, on the other hand, the need to stay connected with the group—an accepted member, a friend among friends. As I have shown in section C., the girls in this study used their involvement in writing activities, specifically story-construction, as a means of including each other and of being included, as well as for establishing authority over their work. In terms of the concept of identity as separateness and connectedness, the girls' use of invitations and requests can be viewed as efforts to connect with others. Their statements informing others of their decisions about what will go in their stories and how they will be written, their statements informing other authors that they will take a part in their stories, and their efforts to claim status positions or maintain the power to bestow status are indicators of separateness. In other words, they used the story-construction activity to

maintain their membership in the group—their 'connectedness'—while still protecting their individuality and their sense of ownership—their 'separateness.'

In order to visualize and explore the concept of identity, I categorized some of the subcategories of social functions in the data coding sheets under the headings "Connectedness" and "Separateness." The example I will use to discuss identity follows in Figure 4.7, below.

As explained in APPENDIX C, the social functions that involve giving of oneself, reaching out, or indicating a desire to be a part of the group in some way are clustered under "Connectedness." Those social functions that involved pulling away from the group by setting oneself above or apart, were clustered under "Separateness." Almost any social function categorized on one side of identity could arguably be placed on the other if an interpretation were to extend deeply enough. For example, a message unit that is coded as "Clarifying" could be interpreted as an effort onthe part of the speaker to upstage her listener, to show off how much better she understood something. In order to provide a framework for discussing separateness and connectedness I had to draw distinctions that necessarily involved making judgements regarding the degree to which a function fell into one category or the other. To help with the decision-making process in drawing the demarcation lines, I used, as guidelines, the general terms from the literature such as involvement, consubstantiality, "being with one's friends," and building a sense of community for the "connectedness" side, and autonomy, independence, distinctness, and "being special" for the "separateness" side of identity (Burke, 1969 [1950]; Dyson, 1989; Solsken, forthcoming; Tannen, 1991 [1986]).

		255	256	258	259		260	261	262	263	265	267	268	270	271		273	274	275	276		277	278	279
Writing	Who-b-whom	•	•							•	•	•	•		•							•	•	•
	Chr chrstcs	•	•							•	•	•	•		•									•
	"est" value									•	•		•		•									•
	Process						•	•	•					•										
	Content	•	•	•	•					•	•	•	•		•							•	•	•
Ties																								
	J – TX – D						•																	
	D – TX – D			•	•																	•		
	D – TX – J										•			•	•									
	J – TX – J	•	•						•	•		•	•										•	•
Chnge	Revising									•		•	•											
	Negotiating																							
Separateness	Ignoring						•																	
	Denying											•												
	Criticizing																			•				
	Refsl to Prtcp																							
	Status Assumptn	•	•		•								•											•
	Imposng/Drctng														•									
	Holding Floor							•	•					•			•	•	•					
	Eval/Jdgng																			•				
	Decidng/Cntrll	•	•	•	•					•		•	•									•	•	•
Connectedness	Accptng Offer																							
	Requesting										•													
	Complying								•	•														
	Agreeing																							
	Status Bestwl									•			•											
	Informing	•	•	•	•				•	•			•		•							•	•	•
	Clarifying																							
	Critiquing																							
	Offrng/suppt																							
	Inviting																							
Access	Closing				•															•				•
	Naming							•						•			•		•			•	•	
	Transitioning			•					•								•							
	Initiating	•																				•		
Form	Response -											•												
	Response - 0						•	•					•											
	Response +																							
	Statement	•	•	•	•				•	•				•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•
	Question										•													
Source																								
	Debra			•	•						•			•	•							•		
	Jess	•	•				•	•	•	•		•	•				•	•	•	•			•	•
	Transcript Line																							

Transcript ID: 3/7 (Bl.3, T.U. #4)

Figure 4.7: Identity

Most visible from the coding sheets was that most topic units showed a fairly even occurrence of message units in both the separateness and connectedness sections, suggesting that the girls were concerned with maintaining a balance between the two sides of identity. Further evidence of the effort to keep a balance showed when individual message units were tabulated in terms of separateness and connectedness: 272 of the 929 message units (29%) were coded only under "Connectedness," 203 (22%) were coded only under "Separateness," and 454 (49%) were coded in both sections. Even taking into consideration the ambiguities associated with some of the sub-categories, the figures show that maintaining a balance between remaining independent and staying included was important to the girls.

In this section I will explore the concept of identity with respect to the girls' social interactions and writing by means of an explication of the topic unit coded above, and the accompanying transcript, below. The interpretation will illustrate more specifically the ways in which the girls flipped the two-sided coin of identity as they carried on a conversation related to their story-constructions.

Transcript 4.8 (3/7, Bl.3, T.U.#4)

255	Jess	[as she colors]: I'm colorful,
256		but nobody else is.
257	Debra	[holding pink marker toward Jess]:
258		I'm gonna . . .
259		This is my color crown.
260	Jess	[not acknowledging Debra's comment or gesture,
261		points her marker at Debra without looking up]:

262 All right,

263 you're the littlest.

264 Debra [sitting down, but keeping eyes on Jess]:

265 Am I the littlest in your story?

266 Jess [looking up at Debra and exchanging markers]:

267 No,

268 I'm the littlest and you're the second.

269 Debra [starts coloring, head down, as she speaks]:

270 Ruth,

271 I'm the second littlest in Jess's story.

272 Jess [drawing as she speaks, eyes don't rise]:

273 Ru . . .

274 um,

275 Debra,

276 don't be a brag about who's the littlest or who isn't or (mumble).

277 Debra: Jess, you're gonna be . . . .

278 Jess: [looking at her drawing]: That's me!

279 I'm the littlest.

In examining the Connectedness and Separateness sections of the Data Coding Sheet (Figure 4.7, above, p. 132), it can be seen that there are four 'phases' in the segment. These phases have been separated from each other by a blank line. The first covers lines 255-259, where the dots involve Deciding/ Controlling and Status Assumption in the Separateness section, and Informing in the Connectedness section. The second, lines 261-271, involves a mix of dots involving several strategies in both sections; the third phase, lines

273-276, shows dots only in the Separateness section, and the final phase, involving lines 277-279, shows a concentration again involving Informing as a connection strategy and Deciding/Controlling and Status Assumption as an indicator of independence. The overall pattern shows an effort to keep a balance between maintaining distance in some way (separateness) and making contact with each other (connectedness). The unit-by-unit interpretation which follows, using the transcript above, shows the strategies the girls used as they carried out this alternation.

Jess started out by making a statement about her Jess-character, referring to her character in the first person: "I'm colorful," (line 255). By making this assertion, she was claiming ownership over her character and her story, giving herself the right to endow her character, and herself, with an attribute—colorfulness. Her second Message Unit, "but nobody else is," further set her apart from everyone else; she gave herself a *unique* attribute in the story—one she wouldn't be granting to anyone else, thus firmly establishing her individuality, and making the attribute one of status by virtue of its rarity. With these two statements, she established her identity as something separate and special from everyone else. However, by spontaneously *informing* the others of her intentions, she was making a connection with them, sharing her plans, or *giving* to them, in the sense that she reached out to communicate and let them know where they stood in her story. In this way, her statements also serve to keep her connected to the group. The weight, however, in this case, seems to be on the side of her assertion of difference, of maintaining her personal identity.

Debra then made her own assertion of separateness. First, she brought attention to the pink marker she was about to use (line 257). This was significant since there was only one pink marker and it was a favorite color,

sometimes an object of hoarding and contention. That she had it made her special in itself. It was a color of privilege or honor when used on the characters. In lines 258 and 259, she announced that she was coloring the crown on her character the special pink. By doing this, she privileged her Debra-character—and herself—in a way similar to the way Jess had just set herself apart from the others by making herself the only colorful character. Debra's use of statements and her assertive decision-making established her as the owner of her story, even though she, like Jess, was sharing herself—connecting—by informing Jess of her intentions.

Jess ignored Debra's bid to bring the conversation around to her story (line 260), but didn't ignore Debra's presence, indicated by her signaling Debra with her marker (line 261), then addressing her. In the next two Message Units (lines 262-263), she brought Debra into her story by bestowing the most honored status on her of being the littlest: "All right, / you're the littlest." This was more of a statement of "Connectedness" than is immediately evident from this segment: one hundred Message Units previous to this one, Jess had, after a lengthy discussion and a strong protest by Debra, bestowed this status on herself, and the position of second littlest on Ruth. Debra had been relegated to the least desirable position of the eldest. For Jess to have revised her earlier decision was a move to comply with Debra's earlier request, giving double strength to her move to involve herself with Debra. She may have made this revision because a few Message Units prior to this segment, Debra had agreed to a suggestion by Jess that Debra make both herself and Jess "the beautifulest" in Debra's story. She may have felt she needed to give Debra something in return. In any case, she still maintained ownership of her own story by *stating* her move rather than inviting Debra to take the position.

Debra's request for clarification ("What?" line 265) indicated her desire to remain connected with Jess and, if she heard what Jess said at all, perhaps to assure herself that she was, indeed, being given this privilege. But it seemed that Jess had committed herself beyond her intent, or perhaps she had wanted to give Debra a strong incentive to pay attention to her story, since Debra hadn't responded to her comment about being colorful. In any case, she withdrew her bestowal in lines 267 and 268 by re-establishing herself as the littlest, but remained connected with Debra by giving her Ruth's place as the second littlest ("No, / I'm the littlest and you're the second."). It may be an indication that she was aware of a certain betrayal of Ruth that Jess made her statement with her head down and lowered voice. Perhaps she was hoping that Ruth wouldn't notice the change. If this were the case, it would suggest that she was trying to protect her friendship with Ruth as well as reinforce her relationship with Debra.

Debra, however, didn't respond with the same subtlety as Jess. She not only implicitly accepted Jess's offer, but she took ownership of it by repeating it to Ruth. Her comment to Ruth in lines 270 and 271 ("Ruth, I'm the second littlest in Jess's story.") suggests she may have been rubbing in the fact that she had been upgraded in Jess's story at Ruth's expense. In connecting with Jess, she was separating herself—standing above—Ruth as well as letting Ruth know of the distinctiveness she had achieved in the eyes of the group's leader.

Jess's reaction was telling; her hesitation in reacting to Debra's statement, and her downcast eyes, followed by her statement of principle ("don't be a brag about who's the littlest or who isn't . . . ," lines 272-276) show that she was, indeed, concerned about Ruth's feelings, as well as being aware of the cultural norm governing taunting others with one's success. Her

comment was a blunt criticism of—and judgement upon—Debra's behavior that separated and disassociated her from her friend. Here the Coding Sheet clearly shows a 'gap' of dots in the Connectedness section; Jess wanted nothing to do with Debra on this matter.

Debra didn't argue—or even respond—to Jess's criticism, which may have been an implicit form of acceptance of the reprimand. Her initiation of talk about her own story ("Jess, you're gonna be . . . .," line 277) may have served to save face; a change of subject could get her away from her embarrassing impropriety. By focusing on her Jess-character ("Jess, you're gonna be . . . .") she may have been trying to appease Jess, certainly a move to maintain her connection with her friend. Jess, too, seemed anxious to leave the issue behind since she might have felt some guilt over the way the event had proceeded. She did her part to change the subject by announcing the wrap-up of the production of her Jess-character ("That's me!" line 278). Her final statement, "I'm the littlest," served to reconfirm, without a doubt this time, her status as the littlest in her story. By not extending her reprimand or doing anything more punitive, Jess was implicitly indicating her forgiveness of Debra. In effect she seemed to be saying, "O.K., that's over. Let's get on with our relationship and our work."

For the girls in this group, their kind of story construction was inextricably interwoven with their sense of personal and social identity. With respect to the connectedness side of identity, the girls drew each other into their stories as a way of validating their relationships with each other, of staying connected with their friends as they carried out the 'work' of school. They were conscious of the power of status as a statement of relative relationships and made an effort to share the status positions in their stories among their friends to preserve both the one-to-one relationships and group

cohesion. They protected each other from each other by taking sides when the odds become uneven. They taught each other, sometimes through subtle hints, sometimes through outright criticism, what the appropriate interaction rules were and how to use them properly. And they used discussion of their stories to stay constantly in touch with each other.

On the separateness side of identity—the need to remain independent, distinctive, and individually competent—the girls called attention to their own stories, sometimes persisting in trying to get others to attend to them; they placed themselves in status positions, playing on their right of ownership; they used the right to bestow status positions on others as a way of bargaining for better positions for themselves; they manipulated both the conversational structure (e.g., having the last say) and the story line in order to maintain a sense of ownership over their work; and they assumed positions as judges, critics, and decision-makers as ways of maintaining their sense of personal validity and dignity in the face of potential subsumption by the group. Even as they 'connected,' they simultaneously 'separated,' for by informing or bestowing status on a friend, for example, they were, at the same time, showing their competence as 'knowers,' or as power brokers.

For these girls, going to the writing table was not simply a means of expressing themselves on paper, or understanding their lives through writing, or exploring the print medium. From their point of view, writing was one important medium in their school lives for establishing, maintaining, building, expressing, and reaffirming their sense of identity in their social group.

E. Summary of the Findings

From the data analysis in Chapter IV, I have shown findings that relate a story construction activity to the ways in which a group of girls affirm their relationships with each other. These findings are listed below.

1. Including Each Other in Their Stories

It was acceptable in this group of girls to include each other as characters in their stories, subject to certain limitations;

An author could include a friend as a character by invitation or by announcing her inclusion, sometimes subject to approval by that friend;

If the invitation or announcement was not explicitly rejected, a writer could assume that consent had been given;

A friend could request or state a desire to be included in the story of a member of the group, subject to rejection or modification by the author;

An author had the right to assign attributes to the friend-character she used in her story, subject to limitations.

2. Ownership Rights to Stories and Characters

An author established ownership over her writing through informative statements to her friends about the actions she was taking or the plans she had for her story;

A participant established ownership over her persona by directing an author to endow the character representing her with attributes of her choosing;

An author established ownership over her writing in part by having the last word in a conversation about her story.

3. Characterization and Status

The girls used character attributes and positioning in the stories as indicators of status;

Both authors and participants bestowed status positions and attributes on others, or assumed them for themselves in their own or others' stories;

The right to refuse to participate in another's story could be used to negotiate a status position;

Participants had a right to refuse to accept a status position or attribute that seemed inappropriate to them.

4. Maintenance of Identity Through Story Construction

The girls used the story construction activity to maintain a balance between their need for connectedness with the group and their need to maintain a sense of independence and distinctness.

The findings from the analysis of transcripts taken from Activity Periods recorded over a full school year describe how a group of girls used kindergarten writing not only to create stories through drawing and dictation (or with personal spelling), but to maintain and clarify, on a moment-by-moment basis, their social standing in the group. From the children's point of view, story-creation for this group of girls involved an interplay between their social relations and the fantasy products they created at the writing table. Writing and sociality were inseparable.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between children's engagement in writing activities and their social interactions with each other. The focus was on a group of girls who regularly went to the writing area during a free-choice activity period and constructed stories using themselves and each other as characters. Particular attention was paid to the social behaviors that were called upon to advance the stories, and the ways in which the story construction process contributed to the children's social relationships and their sense of identity. The conclusions are organized around the two major research questions that provided the framework for the study.

1. Research Question 1: Writing and Social Interactions

My first question was related to the interplay between the social interactions of children working at the task of writing (as defined in their particular school setting) and the writing itself:

> What is the relationship between involvement in writing activities and social interaction among students?

I wanted to see how engagement in writing influenced and was influenced by social interactions. The findings from this study suggest that the act of constructing stories in a social setting as a form of kindergarten writing can,

for some children, support their social agendas and their use of social interaction norms.

Since it was clear from the early stages of the analysis that the girls' communicative behavior conformed in general to previous research findings with respect to soliciting responses from others, as defined in Chapter II, I did not focus on this aspect of their behavior in the study. It is sufficient to say that in the process of constructing stories at the writing table, the group of girls in this study demonstrated the communicative competencies found to be common in peer group interactions.

With respect to issues of status and ownership, the findings of this study extend and re-focus those of earlier research. The research reviewed for this study focused on the functions of roles and status as they affected knowledge use in literacy activities. The girls in the focus group assumed and bestowed status not because of their expertise in areas of knowledge of writing skills and processes, or because of their knowledge of particular content. Rather, they bestowed and assumed positions of status within the content of the writing; they made the stories vehicles for their social positioning. The writing itself was transformed by the social relationships among the writers.

a. Fictionalizing Self and Friends

By including each other as characters in their stories, the girls in this study seemed to be using fictionalization of real people in their writing to test their understanding of their relationships with others. Other researchers suggest such a role for children's fantasy play.

From a cognitive point of view, Pelligrini and Galda's (1982) study found that children's comprehension was better when they reconstructed stories through "thematic-fantasy play" than when they reconstructed stories

verbally or in drawings. "Thematic-fantasy play" was defined as acting out roles and themes, through peer interaction, that are not part of the children's personal experiences (e.g., a fairy tale). Pelligrini and Galda (1982) found that children's understandings were broadened in the process of accommodating and resolving the multiple aspects and interpretations brought to the task by the members of the group. The study further showed that, among kindergartners in particular, comprehension was affected positively by taking roles that involved more active participation.

Paley, in her case study account of Jason, "the boy who would be a helicopter" (1990), views dramatic play and story enactment among children as a way for children not only to understand the social world in which they find themselves, but also to *cope* with that world.

For the girls in this study, fictionalizing themselves and their friends in writing may have helped them comprehend the relationships and interactions that make up their social worlds. As with Paley's Jason, the fantasy element gave the children distance from reality, and allowed them to adjust reality so that it became manipulable and manageable. The dramatization in interaction with peers, requiring accommodation of an individual's views to those of others, may have allowed for greater understanding of the ways humans interact with each other. That is, it may not be story comprehension alone that is enhanced by dramatic play, but social comprehension as well.

By partially fictionalizing themselves and their friends in the presence of those friends, they could not only define how people relate to each other, but also test out their understanding against their friends' responses and make adjustments appropriate to themselves and the group. They social writing practice became a socializing process in itself, for the responses told

them whether their interpretations, through their stories, of the way people work together were, indeed, supported by the group. For example, when Debra found that Ruth was not going to accept a low status position in Debra's story without lowering Debra's status in her own story, Debra adjusted her original character assignment until Ruth was satisfied. As they placed themselves and their friends in fictionalized roles in their stories the girls may have been helping themselves understand their own real-life social relationships.

Pursuing further the contribution of the writing activity to social understanding, the girls' social writing may have contributed to their awareness of the complex, even paradoxical, nature of human social relationships and human needs. It was not such a simple thing, for example, for Debra to give short hair to her short-haired friend, Jess, in her story; Jess seemed to want to believe she had long hair, and even after she started to have doubts about the reality of her hair-length, she insisted that Debra portray her with long hair in the story. Similarly, both Debra and Jess, at different times, came up against difficulties when they didn't assign properly respectful status to their friends in their stories. Their relationships came into jeopardy, and they found themselves struggling to regain a balance between friendship and ownership. Engagement in writing helped the girls see that what they perceived as reality might not match the perceptions of others.

b. Understanding Roles and Status

In the literature review presented in Chapter II, I discussed research findings that related to roles and status. Most of the research looked at classroom situations in which successful completion of tasks depended on collaboration with other students. From the researchers' point of view, roles,

and their accompanying status, related to relative knowledge and skill competencies with respect to the task, and were thereby relatively fixed by the limitations of the task and the skills of the participants. However, when status is viewed from the students' point of view, as in this study, the roles taken by the participants were not assumed for the sake of efficiency in completing a task, but for the sake of establishing or maintaining social positions in the friendship group. In effect, the girls in the study were all essentially relegated to the same two roles: 1) writer of their own stories, and 2) participating members of a social interaction unit.

Since status wasn't primarily associated with knowledge or functions related to achievement of a finished academic product, status positions fluctuated on a moment-by-moment basis as the girls negotiated their social positions in each others' stories. Status positions were more fluid, more changeable because the girls were using status to keep social balance in the group as a whole, rather than to make visible and available human "knowledge bases." An example mentioned in Chapter IV was the time when Jess quietly reallocated the second best status position in her story to Debra (the top having gone to herself) some time after she had relegated that same position to Ruth. When Debra bragged to Ruth about the upgrading she had received at Ruth's expense, Jess reprimanded her. By upgrading Debra's position, Jess seemed to be trying to let Debra know she was valuable. In trying to do it unobtrusively, she seemed to be trying to maintain group cohesion by preserving Ruth's status as well.

The use of friends as characters in their writing provided a means for these girls to keep the group together by sharing social status positions fairly among them. This suggests that when status is viewed from the children's point of view it may serve a different purpose - the maintenance of group

cohesion in this case - than when it is examined in terms of educators' goals for task completion. Such a finding seems to contradict the notion that young children are generally egocentric, a notion that may allow us to underestimate the influence of social interaction among peers in the early years of school. If children are using school writing activities for social ends to the degree that those activities are transformed by their social interactions, then we may need to re-examine our emphasis on writing as a cognitive activity. The findings of this study suggest a consideration of school writing engagement as a form of activity that both gives expression to social events and is transformed by them.

c. Writing as a Dynamic and Historical Social Process

In Chapter II, I proposed a dynamic model of classroom peer interactions in which I suggested that peer interactions were not uni-directional in the sense that an interaction would result only in a written product. Their interactions are constantly in motion as the participants respond to each other and take action in each others' presence. The findings in this study support this model. Writing, as these girls pursued it, was a social process itself. It involved moment-by-moment cue-taking through the ways the characters were arranged and the stories were structured. Because the girls couldn't anticipate what the responses would be to their assertions, offerings, and announcements regarding their intentions for their stories, the stories could only move forward as the conversation proceeded. The stories then *became* processes, governed by the social agendas of the group on that particular day, and built on the foundation of their past interactions. The story-under-construction, subsumed by process, was a constantly changing by-product of the fulfillment of the girls' social agendas.

d. School Writing as a Contextualized Activity

The girls in this study used writing in its standard form more to label pictures and, as time went on, mark significant events with a few words or sentences. The influence of their social interactions on their understanding of writing in the conventional sense must therefore be more speculative than conclusive. It is in this light that I make the following comments about their understanding of writing as a form of language.

The girls in the focus group were beginning to understand, early on in their school careers, the social nature of writing. They were unconsciously experiencing that school writing does not necessarily take place in a vacuum, that it is not a decontextualized, disembodied product of the individual mind, but that a text can be created out of interaction with others through language. Through their inclusion of friends and themselves as characters, the girls were learning that people write about people—even imaginary people—as a result of knowing real people. They were absorbing an understanding of writing as a way of fictionalizing self and others; writing was a medium for showing life simultaneously as it is, and as it could be imagined. This is, perhaps, what Dyson is referring to in a more general sense when she writes, "... the children grow as writers of imagined worlds, and that growth is linked to their lives together as friends and scholars, as fellow reflectors on the world they share" (1989, p.xiii).

e. Audience Awareness

An extension of school writing as a socially contextualized activity is audience awareness. From a cognitive perspective, Bereiter (1980) points out that feedback expectancy is a factor in developing audience awareness in writing. From their own socially-oriented perspective, the girls in this study

seemed to be naturally practicing the same kind of feedback process that is increasingly incorporated into kindergarten-to-college writing classrooms in which the "process approach" to writing instruction is used (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983; Judy & Judy, 1981; Tompkins, 1990). They listened to each other's opinions, suggestions, even demands upon their stories, and practiced accepting and rejecting the input. They experienced the fact that writing goes beyond themselves, that even an audience of close friends can sometimes see the world differently than they do. Their purposes, however, were not cognitive, but social. They were coming to realize that if they wanted to connect with their audience, they had to make revisions and compromises so that their stories would be acceptable. In short, they were becoming familiar with the art of rhetoric, with the idea that writing can be transformed into a tool for social purposes.

f. Ownership of Story Content

The sense of ownership the girls in this group had for their writing seemed to reflect a notion that ideas are the product and property of individuals. They protected their own work with assertive statements like, "That's the story," or "Anyways, it's my story," as well as by more subtle means such as through negotiation and by having "the last word." A threat to ownership could be quite upsetting, as Jess demonstrated when she lost control of her character designations after she made her Debra-character "thirteen" years old and Debra refused to participate in Jess's story. The girls defended each other's ownership rights as well. For example, when Debra was trying to maintain her right to decide who would be the littlest in her story, Ruth came to her defense by saying, "Cuz it's *her* story!" The girls seemed to

believe that ideas for stories belonged to the author and there were limits on how much someone could impose or intrude upon someone else's work.

The girls' need to establish authority over their ideas and actions with respect to their story construction suggests that they were treating a piece of writing almost like an item of tangible, personal property. Ownership of property and respect for the property of others is a cultural value that children start to understand and use as a lever in their social interactions by the middle of their second year (Dunn, 1988). Writing is a transition between the tangible and the intangible. It results in a tangible product, but is also comprised of ideas. For these girls, writing was a combination of verbal story constructions and representational products, so the line between the concrete and the abstract was even less defined, perhaps, than for writing in its developed, standard forms. The girls' feelings about their ideas suggest that by early school age, some children may have broadened the concept of ownership and begun to include less tangible items - their ideas and the orchestration of those ideas - among their possessions.

Another dimension of ownership and authorship relates to individual agency, which I will take up when I discuss the conclusions for the second research question related to identity.

g. Ownership of Persona

Related to ownership of ideas is the issue of ownership of character representation. The girls may also have been developing an early understanding of what Shuman (1986) refers to as "entitlement" with respect to written storytelling rights. Shuman describes an incident in which junior high school students became outraged at the way in which a newspaper reported a stabbing incident at their school. There were inaccuracies in the

factual reporting and implications that the school as a whole was prone to violence. "[The students] rejected the representation of the newspaper. They did not dispute the fact that the school had problems, but they did not grant the reporters entitlement to portray the school as a problem school" (p.140). Shuman goes on to say that the students "based their challenges to entitlement on the accuracy of outsiders' perspectives," that their "complaints revealed a concern not only with what happened but with the text, the mode of expression" (141). Not only the content of the story, but the form and manner of representation were subject to dispute.

Although Shuman's particular discussion of storytelling rights in this situation focuses more on the various contexts of the situation, her attention to the "relationships between stories and events" (p.139), and the perceptions of the participants toward those relationships, connects with the concern that Debra, Jess, Ruth, and Cindy had about the care with which they were represented by each other. These five- and six-year-old girls expressed the same sensitivity as Shuman's adolescents, that real people who are portrayed in others' writing should be represented fairly and without defamation. They were also experiencing the complexity of determining the thin line between misrepresentation and 'fact.' The simple example of Debra's portrayal of Jess with short hair was a kind of 'defamation' of Jess's concept of herself; she saw it as a misrepresentation. Although a rational 'court of law' sitting on the question would have to rule that Jess's hair was, indeed, the shortest in the group, Jess did not want her portrait to depict her that way. Her portraitist, Debra, being sensitive to her friend, allowed her to be portrayed as she wanted to be. But other situations became contentious, as when Ruth didn't want to be so 'old' in Debra's story, or Debra to be "thirteen" in Jess's.

Like Shuman's junior high school students, the girls in this study had a taste of the trouble that can arise when there is conflict between the rights of writers and those of their "subjects." In the cases of conflict, the girls were coming to understand, perhaps, the power that writing represents in a social group, and the care that is necessary in using it.

By intertwining their social lives with their story constructions, the girls were experiencing and exploring some the broadest rules governing the act of writing in their culture.

h. Summary

For the group of girls in this study, the process of creating plays was a social process. As they invited and assigned roles to their friends and requested and assumed roles in their friends' stories, they became actively engaged in each other's perceptions of the social order of their group. Because positions in the plays sometimes had status value, the process of giving and accepting character roles became a process of negotiating ownership of the story content. Authors acted to keep ownership of their decisions to relegate roles, and participants acted to assure that their personas were represented fairly and to their liking. Their playwriting was a contextualized activity, subject to relatively unpredictable moment-by-moment influences from their participant-audience. This kind of writing, for these girls, was not only an individual creative process, but also a process of keeping their social relationships in balance.

2. Research Question 2: Identity and the Balance Between Separateness and Connectedness

My second question was aimed at looking at the relationship between the writing activity and children's sense of identity:

How do children writing together in a school setting establish with each other their sense of separateness as distinct and capable individuals and their sense of connectedness as members within the writing community in which they are working?

a. Identity Defined

I have defined identity in this paper as a two-sided social function consisting of the need to be connected or involved with others and the need to be separate, distinct, or autonomous in comparison with others. It was from Solsken (forthcoming) that I adopted the terms "separateness" and "connectedness," but other researchers and theorists have used a variety of terms to describe the duality implicit in the meaning of the term: Tannen uses "involvement" and "independence" in one book (1991 [1986]) and "intimacy" and "independence" in another (1990); Dyson uses "being with ones' friends" and "being special" (1989); Burke (1969 [1950]) uses "consubstantiality," which incorporates both separateness and connectedness in one; and Brooke (1991) describes the dichotomy in terms of actions, or "stances": "compliance" expressing connectedness, and "resistance" for expressing separateness. Regardless of the terms used, all agree that identity is socially constructed. LeFevre (1987) defines invention, or creativity (the action resulting from being separate or distinct), as a "*dialectical process* [emphasis hers] in that the inventing individual(s) and the socioculture are co-existing and mutually defining. ... New ideas are created by this dialectical partnership. Individual human agents always act in the context of their interconnections with others ..." (p.35). Brooke (1991) summarizes the work of the researchers and theorists in the light of social construction: "... all of them explore how

the self is formed in interaction with society, only accumulating meaning and value from such interaction" (p.12).

b. Identity and Writing as a Social Activity

The girls in this study made the writing a social activity in two ways. First, they engaged in the activity together, as a friendship group, and talked about the content of their stories. That they repeatedly came together to write suggests that not only was writing an activity with which each of them identified individually, but it was a focus of identity for the group, a mutually accepted forum with which they identified themselves as a unit. Other children wrote at the writing table, some with friends, but unlike these girls, they did not talk much about their writing, and the friendship groups with respect to choice-writing were not as consistent as this one.

The second way the girls made writing a social activity, dependent on the first, was that they incorporated themselves and each other into their stories. It was the use of themselves and their friends as characters in their stories that seemed to create a medium in which the girls could explore their sense of connectedness with the group and their sense of autonomy and distinctness. The focus of the data analysis for this study was on this incorporation of themselves into their stories. The findings of the study suggested three ways through which these girls balanced their identities: 1) by giving and taking roles in each others' stories, 2) through their assertion of authorship, and 3) through their management of status.

c. Identity and Role Negotiation

Dunn (1988) points out that the ability to take on the identity of another in pretend play shows up in most children by the end of their second year. When siblings take on roles in their interactions, they become

"complementary actors" (p.122), expecting a coordination appropriate to the nature of the roles. Dunn (1988) also found that children will comply more frequently in pretend play where they would resist in real life interactions. In terms of identity, this suggests that imaginary roles are a way of protecting the participants' sense of separateness while remaining socially engaged with others.

The girls in this study seemed to be using their story writing as a more abstract and, perhaps, more sophisticated, in-school form of this previously developed type of pretend play. In writing, they had discovered the role-play tool of fictionalizing real people, including themselves, which could allow them to be subservient, or complying, or dominant, or other characteristics that, in their real social interactions, might have threatened their sense of who they perceived themselves to be. This suggests that being a character in another's story may have provided the children with a way of reflecting their self-image back to themselves; that the way they were portrayed by friends, and the way they pressured friends to portray them, provided them with a mirror of who they thought they were. And if the roles they adopted or were assigned did threaten their sense of separateness, the social nature of the story construction process they had developed made the roles open to negotiation because they were fictions to begin with.

When the girls assigned roles to others in their stories, they had to coordinate the roles, just as the young children Dunn observed coordinated their roles in their pretend play. For example, when Ruth asked why she had to be the big sister in Debra's play, Debra explained, "Because Jess and me already picked them [the younger positions]." Because Debra wanted a caretaker for her self-character and her Jess-character, who were both infants, it didn't make sense to have more babies. When Ruth, who was working on a

status issue, negotiated Debra into making her Ruth-character three years old, Debra had to readjust her concept of caretaker: "Okay, but Ruth ... pretend you were really little, but ... you really took care of us, right? Because we're littler than you." It was important to Debra that the roles of her characters make sense in terms of her understanding of real-life situations. However, she had to compromise in order to stay connected with Ruth and still keep her story in her own hands. Brooke (1991) labels this process of exploring and resolving competing or conflicting social roles as "identity negotiation," the process of resolving the tensions and pressures of the competing definitions of self that different social situations impose on an individual. His perspective suggests that the kind of social writing the girls in this study practiced might constitute identity negotiation for them.

d. Identity and Authorship

The girls in this study seemed to see authorship as a form of ownership of property, as I discussed in section 1., above. But I suggested at the end of that section that ownership of the writing might be connected with identity as well; the sense of ownership over their written work might go beyond a developmental understanding of property rights.

One possible connection with identity might come from the girls' sense of what it means to be an author in our culture. From the exposure the girls had had, as middle class children, to quantities of children's literature and to discussions of the works of specific authors, they may have begun to absorb the cultural value we currently place on being an author, and the rights and honors that authors receive. Foucault (1979) points out that this singling out of authors is applicable more to authors of narratives than to scientific texts at this time in history, and narrative was the type of text the girls were writing.

Foucault suggests that we attach status and value to names of authors, a notion the girls may have understood. Whether they had absorbed such subtleties from their cultural encounters with literature or not, they may have begun to feel that being an author gives them an identity, a distinctness from others. They may have understood that their ideas were a representation of themselves as separate individuals, like their fingerprints. Such connections between identity and the concept of the function of an author in the broader culture is speculative, but could be part of the reason ownership of their work seemed important to them.

Perhaps a more appropriate conclusion to the findings in the data, given the age of the children, is suggested by Dunn (1988) in her discussion of self-interest as the development of a sense of *agency*. She quotes Cooley (1902) from Harter (1983):

> The first definite thoughts that a child associates with self-feeling are probably those of his earliest endeavours to control visible objects - his limbs, his playthings, his bottle and the like. Then he attempts to control the actions of the persons about him, and so his circle of power and self-feeling widens without interruption to the most complex of mature ambition (pp. 145-146). [Dunn, pp. 176-177]

With respect to authorship and identity, Cooley's notion suggests that the girls in this study may view their writing as something they can control, the way they learned to control their bodies and objects at an earlier stage. Writing was another step toward "the most complex of mature ambition." Being an author, owning their own ideas, may contribute to their sense of being agents of their own actions, thereby contributing to their sense of distinctness.

But agency has its "connected" side as well. In his discussion of identity negotiations, Brooke (1991) suggests that when student writers are free to

explore being in the role of a writer, as opposed to being in the role of a student, they become more active; they become social agents (my term for his description) who can contribute to the ongoing conversation and try out reflection and persuasion. By adding this perspective, agency links control with social engagement, and both separateness and connectedness are served.

e. Identity and Status

The girls in my study were concerned with status. They used certain characteristics such as age and clothing color to attribute status to the characters in their stories. As authors, when they wanted to express their sense of separateness, they assumed status positions for themselves in their stories. As participants, when they wanted to show their connectedness with the others, they bestowed status positions on their friends. The status issue worked to the advantage of the group members as well. When the girls who were participants in another's story felt they weren't being properly acknowledged by others, they requested, demanded, or negotiated better status positions.

Tannen (1991 [1986]) points out that "[t]he act of granting permission to take a role of equality in itself frames one as in a superior position. And those who grant permission to use some signs of equal status will certainly have some strong feelings about which liberties should not be taken" (p.99). The girls seemed to see the status positions in their stories in the light of Tannen's more general observations about social interactions. Recall, for example, the incident when Debra was trying to maintain control over a barrage of requests and demands from her friends for status positions in her story. Her repeated revisions and self-contradictions about who would be endowed with which

age appeared to have been her attempt to maintain a sense of control over "which liberties should not be taken" with the status positions in her story.

The findings showed that the girls were aware of the power of status as a social interaction tool and that they understood how to use their writing as a means of wielding and controlling that power.

f. Summary

In summary, the girls in this study used the activity of writing, of constructing stories that included themselves and their friends, to maintain both their sense of connectedness with the group and their sense of autonomy and distinctness. By being accepted in their friends stories, they knew they were recognized as members of a community. Through the ways in which their friends characterized them, they were learning what their roles and status were within that group, at that time, in that location, and with respect to that activity; they discovered where they stood in the shifting social hierarchies at any given moment. When they were relegated temporarily to a low position in someone else's story, their own writing gave them a means of having the highest position. As Debra said, "I love when I get to be the littlest in my stories." Their success or failure in re-negotiating their positions as characters in others' stories, and in maintaining their ownership of their own decisions, let them know how much power they had to change their standing at that time and place. In being given some say in the decision-making about how they were represented, they could let their friends know how they wanted to be seen; they used their involvement in others' stories to project a social image of themselves. Social story construction became not only an affirmation and a mirror reflection of who they were and how they stood as

social beings, but their social writing became a way for them to construct and reconstruct who they were in that social circumstance.

B. Implications

1. Implications for Teaching

Traditionally, as educators, we assumed that children should be taught language processes such as reading and writing as though such processes were new to them, unrelated to anything they had experienced before. We did not make use of their extensive knowledge of language and their ability to manipulate it in complex ways. Those assumptions have been changing in the last 25 years as our understanding of children's learning processes has been enlightened by research based on systematic observations of children working in the settings of their normal lives. Many educators are now recognizing that children come to school as proficient users of the language of their home and local community culture. In the five short years of their lives before they enter the broader cultural medium of school, they master use of 10-25,000 words, the basic grammatical structures, and the prosodic cues to which they have been exposed. We now recognize that literacy learning is not a distinct, unrelated process from oral language learning; the two are learned in the same ways. Some teachers are beginning to apply this perspective to literacy learning by adjusting their pedagogical practices, classroom environments, and curricula to take advantage of what children already know about language learning.

What has not been widely acknowledged as a pedagogical variable is children's sophisticated proficiency with the social interaction systems in which they have participated during their pre-school years. The data from this study demonstrate that children's adoption of the culture's social values

can be so complete by age five or six that they can fulfill their social agendas simultaneously as they become engaged in the early phases of learning to write. That is, not only do they engage in social interactions as they write, but they already have such a sophisticated understanding of complex social elements like status and ownership that they can interweave those elements into the already complex process of composing stories and representing them on paper. In short, children understand and use social conventions and values and interaction patterns as well as they understand and use language conventions.

We can look at the implications in the narrow sense of academic achievement, traditionally the central goal of schooling. If our goals as educators are to help children become literate, it is reasonable that we take into consideration the factors that influence academic achievement. If children are blending their social agendas with the writing activities we provide, their social agendas affect what and how they learn about the uses and processes of writing. In their series of qualitative studies of K-6 writers, Cambourne and Turbill (1987) identified the elements of learning to write that young writers must manage and the personal strategies they use to cope with the complexity of learning to write in a process-writing classroom. My study suggests that it may also be important to identify the social elements children must manage as they write in an interactive environment and the coping strategies they develop to accommodate both their social agendas and the production of their written products. By being aware of the social elements in the writing process that affect children's identities, and by being aware of the strategies they use to establish and preserve their positions in their writing groups, we may find answers beyond the individual deficit or

cultural deprivation models so often cited in response to the question of why some children fail to learn to read and write in school.

The implications of this study may be viewed in a broader light than merely how the findings influence improvement in the achievement of measurable academic goals. If social interactions and social identity with respect to writing are significant influences for children, as they seemed to be for the girls in this study, then understanding children's social interactions becomes tied to the purposes of schooling. For example, if some kinds of writing activities encourage some children to focus on issues of status and ownership in their writing, as this study shows, then educators may want to decide whether status and ownership are cultural elements they want to help children explicitly learn to manage in constructive ways. The implication of this study is that education does not simply consist of acquiring the facts of history, literature, and science on which the culture is built, and of learning the processes for using that knowledge, but it also consists of learning the ways in which people interact together as they process that cultural knowledge. Since their sense of identity can be affected by the social interactions surrounding their involvement in school tasks and activities, children's acceptance of the school-supported processes and knowledge may also be affected by those social interactions. Such a perspective may require a re-orientation of schooling, from an emphasis on academic acquisition to an emphasis on the learning community and the ways knowledge is shared and used for social purposes. Viewing education from such a "socio-academic" perspective could affect not only the way teachers arrange their classroom environments and the goals they set for school activities, but it could affect the subject matter, materials, and processes they select for emphasis. Educators, parents, and other representatives of a community may find it

necessary to explicitly identify the social elements they value in order to compare them to the values the children are reinforcing among themselves through their interactions as they work. That would mean that in addition to systematic observations of academic achievement, classroom observations would also include notation of the ways activities such as writing are used by the children to further their social agendas. Pedagogical decisions would be based not only on what and how the children are learning academically, but on what social practices and values are being reinforced in the process.

2. Implications for Further Research

Research has barely begun to uncover the secrets of school writing from the child's perspective. The relationship of writing and sociality for the girls in this study was relatively visible. Research needs to uncover the less visible undercurrents of children's social lives as well, the whispers and nudges and giggles, the asides, and the silences. By understanding how children's social lives are tied up with writing, how they use writing to negotiate their relationship with the world, we will be better able to orchestrate the writing opportunities we provide for them so that they not only fulfill our agenda that they become writers, but that writing serves their social and personal needs as well.

This study is limited to one school, one classroom, one group of girls within that classroom, and one type of writing activity—the social construction of stories. Although a case study allows for close scrutiny of a concept, more research is needed to find out how the concept applies in other settings, with other children, and in relation to other kinds of writing activities.

a. Settings

This study needs to be duplicated in a variety of schools, grade levels, and types of writing classes. The school in which this study took place was a private school with a limited number of students, perhaps an exceptional number of adults to oversee children, and more than an average variety of materials and services available for the curricular use. The teacher's definition of writing was broad and flexible, allowing the children considerable room in interpreting what counted as the activity of writing. Children's social agendas should be studied in settings where writing is more conventionally or differently defined to see how other kinds of restrictions affect how they use writing for social purposes. This includes looking at the tensions between home and school as well.

b. Participants

This study focused primarily on a group of girls who liked to interact socially and whose writing was clearly part of their social lives. The place of writing in the lives of the others in the classroom was not as clear and would need, perhaps, a different kind of scrutiny than I have undertaken in this study. How, for example, is quiet Daisy's sense of social identity served by her singular focus on writing letter after letter to her parents throughout the fall, each of which has the same message, "Dear Mom and Dad, I love you, Love Daisy." Each is sealed in a single envelope and addressed jointly to her parents, who have just separated and are getting a divorce. Why did David enthusiastically attend the writing table nearly every day in the fall, then, after being away for several long blocks of time due to sickness and extended vacations, did he stop going and almost refuse to talk about writing at all? Was there a connection? What about those who don't write, or who don't

write in conventional ways? Why was articulate Joshua, a regular all year at the writing table, "not interested" (by his account in the interview) either in practicing conventional writing, dictating stories around the monsters he drew, or lending himself as a character in the girls' stories? How was his identity served by his form of writing? And what happens in writing groups where the students are not friends or close associates?

We need to look at other children: those who actively resist writing as defined in the classroom; for comparison, those who choose other forms of symbolic representation through which to work out their personal agendas (such as drama, block play, art activities, science. etc.); and those who write on their own or who write in the company of others, like Tisha and Daisy, but don't talk. How does writing serve or not serve their identities? We need to look at gender differences. Tannen's work (1990) indicates that female interactions tend to orient them toward sharing of status and ownership, or at least toward and appearance of sharing, while males tend to orient their interactions toward support of hierarchical relationships. Research that compares mixed-gender groups and groups of boys, as well as groups of girls engaged in writing activities may indicate if their are gender differences in the ways writing activities are used for social purposes. Age and experience with writing may determine how students use writing for social purposes, or what social purposes are important. And cultural and socio-economic differences could influence the social purposes to which writing is put. To learn the breadth of ways writing and children's social agendas are intertwined, all of these areas are open to further research.

c. Different Writing Activities and Genres

This study focused mainly on the writing area, but there were other kinds of writing activities available in the room. There were observation forms in the discovery area, list-makers and Post-it notes in the house area, chart paper, a blank calendar, and a blank number square in the 'school' area, labelling and sign-making paper in the block area. The ways in which the type or genre of writing affects children's social agendas needs to be examined. For example, it may be that having long hair may not be the way someone wants to be represented in true life, or a realistic story, or a biography, but *in a fairy tale* it's the way that child wants to be viewed. We need to look at the kinds of texts being built in relation to acceptances and rejections.

d. Change Over Time

Although this study took place over a year, neither the children's social or academic change over time was a focus of the analysis. Other research is needed to find out if children's social interactions as they write contributes to their development as writers and their maturity as social beings. Similar studies at different grade levels are needed, and different research methods for looking at growth within a given year.

e. Action Research

Action research is needed in developing observation tools for teachers that will help them understand the children's social agendas so they can maximize the building of children's identity with writing activities. They need practical techniques for assessing the nature of the relationship between the two so they can match the kinds of social writing activities appropriate to the needs of each child in their rooms.

C. Summary

Writing can be usefully viewed in many ways, from its function as a mechanical skill, to its rhetorical functions, to its use for personal catharsis. This study views one kind of writing - school writing - with respect to the functions it may have for children. The findings show that some children's agendas for writing activities may be different than those of the adults who sponsor them. The findings suggest that if we view writing from a child's perspective, we may see more than the product, more than the carefully established markers of developmental growth in skills, more than the functions that serve the school and the culture at large. We may see that there are functions in the children's lives served as they actively engage in the writing act. While it was in process, school writing for the children in this study went beyond the boundaries of writing as a separable language process; writing for the case study girls was social life itself. The process of constructing stories using themselves and their friends as characters was also a process of maintaining their status in the group, their ownership over their own ideas and work, and of maintaining their sense of identity as distinct individuals and as involved members of the group.

Solsken refers to literacy as an action through which people define themselves (Solsken, forthcoming, 7-65). The findings of this study support a theory of writing as a form of social action through which school children can, and do, define themselves. Even more, they define others, reflecting back to their friends images of who they think they are as well. Where does Debra see herself in the group when Jess makes her the eldest and Ruth second in rank to herself? How does her status change in relationship to Jess when she asserts herself in refusing to take such a position in Jess's story? Writing was a

kaleidoscope filled with views of themselves and their friends in an infinitely varied tumble of combinations. Such uses by the children of school writing allow stories to become ongoing, constantly changing metaphors for the children's experiences and their interactions with each other. Writing, for the girls in the focus group, was a way of re-working their social world so that they understand that world and their place in it. A theory of school writing needs to recognize the social agendas of the students if it is to fully reflect the nature of writing, for writing is a social construction.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

NOTE: These questions were used as general guidelines only. The children's responses determined the direction the interviews took within each general area.

[Overall, undirected concept]

Talk to me about writing.

[Socio-cultural concept]

Tell me about writing in the world. About what it's used for. About how people use it.

[Writing process – general]

Talk to me about how people learn to write.

Tell me about how you learned to write.

Tell me what you think people do when they want to write, but don't have any ideas.

Talk to me about what you think people do when they don't know how to write a word.

[Writing process – social]

Talk to me about being with others when you are writing. What happens when you write with other kids around?

Who do you like to be with when you're writing? Why?

Who do you not like to be with when you're writing? Why?

I've seen you help others with their writing. Talk to me about helping other children with their writing. Tell me about the ways you help.

Talk to me about the *people* (grownups, mother, father) who help you learn to write.

Tell me about the *ways* they help you with your writing.

Talk to me about another child you have helped. Tell me about the ways.

Tell me about a friend who has helped you with your writing and how s/he helped you.

[Writing process – personal]

Tell me what writing is like for you.

Tell me about the things you write about. Give me some examples.

Talk to me about what you do when you can't think of something to write.

Tell me what you do when you don't know how to write a word.

Tell me about something you have written that you feel good about.

APPENDIX B

SELECTED TRANSCRIPTS

APPENDIX B

SELECTED TRANSCRIPTS

Transcript, December 13

Block 1

Topic Unit #1

[Ruth and Debra sitting opposite each other; Jess at end of table, between them; Cindy to left of Ruth.]

Jess [first words after sitting down, directed to Cindy]: What are you writing?

gonna write a story for Ms Wykowski.

Topic Unit #2

[While she speaks, Debra pulls the basket of markers toward her. Jess turns to her.]

Don't grab.

There's two markers.

[Pulls basket back to center of table.]

You can have those ones,

you can have those ones.

Debra: Jess.

I made these over (?) my own side.

[Pulls can nearer. Jess grabs basket, pulls in front of herself.]

Jess: Well,

there's lots of markers over there.

and we share,

19 we don't have two baskets.

20 [Jess holds onto basket, looks at Debra who looks back at her, then
21 at the basket.]

22 Jess: All right?

23 [Debra doesn't say anything. Jess stands and carries basket back to
24 storage shelves. Then comes back and reaches for the can of markers
25 that's in the middle of the table. Can't reach. Debra is reaching
26 for them too, and is closer.]

27 Jess: Please pass the markers.

28 [Debra puts them in front of the two of them, central enough so
29 Ruth and Cindy can also reach. All four are drawing.]

.....

Topic Unit #3

30 Cindy: I'm writing a story for Ms Carter.

31 writing a story about Ms Carter.

32 Ruth (?): I miss her.

33 Cindy: About her and me.

34 Debra: Me too.

35 (inaudible)

36 [Ms Carter is the student teacher who has just finished her
37 practicum in the classroom.]

38 Cindy: And I'm gonna put it in my envelope.

39 [smiles at Sam, not visible at other end of the table]

40 I'm gonna make a envelope.

41 Debra: I mig. . .

42 I might. . .

43 I'm making a (card?) for her but this is not it.

44 [she's drawing in a stapled booklet.]

45 [Jess leans over to watch her.]

46 Jess: I know it is. . .

47 not.

48 [pointing to her own picture]

49 Do you know where I got this picture?

Topic Unit #4

50 Debra: Jess,

51 do you remember I talked to you last night?

52 Jess [looking at her in surprise]:

53 No!

54 Debra [nodding] I *did*!

55 I did talk to you last night (inaudible).

56 Jess: Last night??

57 Debra: Oh. . .

58 N. . .

59 Yeah, last night.

60 Jess: I didn't see you,

61 I was asleep in bed.

62 Debra: No

63 you talked to me!

64 Jess [big smile of revelation]: Oh yeeaah!

65 I remember.

66 Debra: Wasn't that funny?

67 Jess: I heard her saying, "Get out of her chair,

68 get out of her chair."

69 Debra: No I sa. . .

70 No I said, "Bad boy."

71 Did you hear me say that?

72 Jess: Yeah

73 because. . .

because see your bunny went under the chair.

Debra: But. . .

Jess: and it wouldn't come out.

Debra: Right.

But its uh. . .

you know that chair. . .

that they have two. . .

I have two chairs. . .

but I can't go under it.

Because I can't fit under it.

Jess: And you couldn't even get your bunny.

Debra: Right

And I had to push out the chair so I could reach him

but then he

running back in

and panicking

and he was trying to get out.

(inaudible)

but I didn't stop.

[Jess is sounding out a word as she writes.]

Debra [turning to Ms Wykowski, sitting at other end of table]:

Ms Wykowski, Oreo went under my big chair and I couldn't get him.

Kelly: Do you have a mischievous bunny like Peter Rabbit?

Debra: Yes.

But he's not nice.

He bites and he scratches.

[Kelly laughs.]

Ruth [smiling, and listening to Debra]:

You know what?

103		I have the. . .
104		I have the control. . .
105	Debra	[not hearing Ruth]:
106		He bites me a lot of times.
107	Kelly:	Do you think he can learn not to do that?
108	Debra:	I don't know.
109	Jess:	*Train* him
110		not to bite you.
111	Kelly:	Could you see if you train him not to bite?
112	Cindy	[looking up and smiling at Ms Wykowski]:
113		I finished my book.
114	Debra:	He doesn't even listen to me.
115	Cindy:	I finished my booook.
116	Jess:	Why don't you get him something to chew on?
117	[Kelly starts to attend to Cindy; everyone talking.]	
118	Debra:	Yeah. . .
119	Jess:	So he won't chew *you*.
120 121		[tapping Debra on the arm]: Hey why don't you show Ms. Wykowski where the bunny scratched you.
122 123	[Debra pulls her sleeve up and they both look at her arm. Holds arm toward Kelly (out of sight of the camera).]	
124	Debra:	Ms Wykowski look what my bunny did.
125	[unknown response from Kelly.]	
126		[looking at fingers]:
127		And he scratched me on my fingers, but I think it's gone now.
128	Sam	[out of sight, interrupting Debra]:
129		Debra!
130		Debra!
131	Debra:	Yeah?
132	Sam:	Why don't you give him a nice juicy carrot?

133 Debra: Yeah.

134 I'll give him a nice juicy carrot. . .

135 soon as I get home tonight.

136 [goes back to drawing.]

137 Sam: Yeah.

138 He'll chomp on the nice juicy carrot and he'll. . .

139 Jess: I'd give him lettuce.

140 Debra [nodding]: Yeah lettuce.

141 I'm gonna get out his lettuce. . .

142 ca. . .

143 carrot sack.

144 Kelly: Yeah I thought rabbits (?).

145 Jess [overlaying Kelly]:

146 Make a salad.

147 [leaning over toward Debra, speaking louder]

148 Make a salad.

149 Kelly: I didn't think they liked to eat

150 fingers and things.

151 I thought they like to eat vegetables (?).

152 Jess: Make a salad.

153 Make a salad.

154 Debra: Yeah.

155 But not anything else in it

156 just lettuce

157 and carrots.

158 Jess: Yeah and. . .

159 And celery.

160 Debra: Yeah they like celery.

161 Oh

162		and those little yellow things,
163		they like, too.
164		I know
165		because he ate all of it.
166	Jess	(Ruth?): What?
167	Debra	I asked my mom what it was and she said
168		Oreo ate all of it.
169	Ruth:	Anh. (acknowledging sound)
170	Debra:	Too bad Oreo ate all of it.
171	[Sam has come around to the girls end of the table. Reaches for	
172	marker can, which is in the center of their end of the table.]	
173	Sam:	You don't have to put it way over there.
174		Whydoncha put it way over there.
175		[shoves marker can toward the center of the whole table.]
176	[I had taken Sam's chair, so there was some juggling. While I was	
177	moving he complained about the markers being so far away.]	
178	Debra	[reaching for black marker, talking to no one in particular]:
179		A little black bunny-ba-loo.
180	[Sam sits closer to the girls and can now reach the markers.]	
181	Sam:	Now I can reach. . .

Transcript, December 13

Block 2

Topic Unit #1

182	Debra	[talking as she draws and as Jess comes back to her seat]:
183		This one's just gonna be the beginning of the show.
184	Jess:	Yeah
185		It's gonna be a show.
186	Debra:	Can I be in it?
187	Jess:	Maybe.
188	Debra:	Please?
189	Jess:	Maaybe.
190		Maybe maybe maybe.
191		I don't know yet.

.....

Topic Unit #2

192	Sam:	Don't keep saying, 'Please,'
193		or she won't. . .
194		probably won't let you.
195	Jess :	That's what my mom always tells me.

..... end of Topic Unit #1

196	Debra:	I say please please please
197		and she says,. 'No no no.'
198		I said, 'Please please' this morning because
199		Mom didn't let me bring Violin to school

200		Waaaa waaaa waaaa waaaa.
201	Jess:	Yeah you can't bring your bunny to school!
202	Ruth:	You have to tell your teacher
203		(?) that's my mom
204		because,see, everyone's got a (?)
205		(?) that's stuck to *this school*. . .
206		*this school*.
207	Jess:	What did you do with it?
208	Ruth:	She (?)
209	Jess:	What is someone is allergic to bunnies?
210	Sam:	Well
211		the next time I can bring a cat to school. . .
212	Debra:	But I'm allergic to. . .
213		I think I'm allergic. . .
214		I'm allergic to some biotic medicine.
215	Jess:	Your mom told me that
216		sometimes you're allergic to your bunny.
217	Debra	[nodding vigorously]: Yeah!
218		Sometimes I sneeze with him around.
219		I *am* allergic to bunnies,
220		I think.
221		I don't know.
222		(?)
223	Sam:	Well next time. . .
224		next time
225		(can't make out his language)

Topic Unit #3

227	Ruth	[turning to Jess]: Jess,
228		What color do you want to be?
229		Do you wanna be one of the fairies?
230	Jess:	Yeah
231		I wanna be one of the fairies.
232	Debra	[not looking up]: I wanna be one of the fairies, too,
233		Ruth.
234	Ruth:	'kay.
235	Cindy	[near Debra, beyond camera most of time]:
236		Me too.
237	Ruth:	'kay.
238	Debra:	I'm drawing a book about. . .
239		I'm drawing a book about. . .
240		[lifts head and looks up]
241		um. . .
242	Ruth:	I'm first making me, though.

.....

Topic Unit #4

243	Debra:	I'm drawing a book about. . .
244 245	[Jess knocks Ruth's arm as she reaches for a marker. Makes Ruth mess up her drawing. Debra attends to the interchange.]	
246		Jeesssssss!
247	[Jess laughs.]	
248		Jess,
249		erase it.
250		[Ruth erases the mark.]
251	Debra:	I'm drawing a book about. . .
252		um. . .

253 I'm drawing a book about. . .

254 Oh, let's seeee. . .

255 about. . . t-t-t

256 Jess: Does that look like a carrot?

257 Debra [leaning over to look]: Yeeeah?

258 Jess: Does it look like a carrot?

259 [all talking. Individuals indistinguishable. Jess picks something
260 up off floor and says something while she's down below table level.
261 When she sits again she says]:

262 And my cousin always kicks me.

263 She knows I do magic.

264 [Ruth says something unclear about real magic.]

.....

Topic Unit #5

265 Jess: She's always taking my things.

266 Debra [to Jess]: D'you wanna be this fairy, Jess?

267 Jess: And anyways. . .

268 Debra: I'm this fairy.

269 [taps the picture—the one she's been working on since the
270 outset, which is a figure of a girl holding a bunny.]

271 I'm the oldest fairy.

.....

Topic Unit #6

272 Jess [continuing her previous line of thought]:

273 And anyways

274 Katie always takes all my things,

275 right, Ruth?

276 Ruth [not looking up from work]:

277 Right.

278 Jess: She always takes all our things.

.....

Topic Unit #7

279 Jess: I'm gonna have two ballet (?)

280 Ruth: I'm ma. . .

281 This is gonna be you, Jess.

282 [referring to same picture said previously was herself.]

283 Jess: I'm making me first.

284 Ruth: I'm making you first.

285 Jess: I'm making me. . .

286 Debra: The next fairy is gonna be Jess.

287 But there're no babies.

288 Jess: Awwwww

289 I wanted to be a. . .

290 Can I be a little sister?

291 Debra: Uh. . .
292 No.

293 Jess: Can I be four?

294 (?) six?

295 Debra: Yeah you're six.

296 Ruth: Can I be seven?

297 Debra: Ruth. . .

298 I don't think. . .

299 Yes you can. . .

300 No! No!

301 How 'bout. . .

302 Cindy [interrupting Debra]:

303 Can I be. . .

304 can I be um. . .

305 can I be five?

306 Debra [nods]: Yup.

307 And Ruth,

308 you can be five, too.

309 Ruth: 'kay.

310 Debra: No,

311 I mean Ruth has to be six.

312 Ruth: 'kay.

313 Debra: No. . .

314 Cindy: She wants seven.

315 Debra: Yeah,

316 she has to be. . .

317 Ruth's seven.

318 Ruth you're seven.

319 [Ruth looks at Jess, then points to the picture she, Ruth, has just
320 drawn on the third page of her booklet—a little picture of a
321 little girls in a fancy dress.]

322 Jess [looking closely at Ruth's picture]:

323 Awww,

324 look at that dress!

325 [smiles at Ruth]

326 Ruth: It's gonna be cuter.

327 I'm gonna make the dress better.

328 Cindy [Holding her picture up]:

329 Like my picture, Jess?

330 Jess [concentrating on her drawing, doesn't look up as she speaks]:

331 Now what does this look like?

332 Ruth [referring to her own picture]: Jess

333 this is you.

334 D'you. . .

335 Jess [louder]: Now what does this look like?

336 [Both Debra and Ruth lean over to look at Jess's drawing.]

337 Debra: I don't know.

338 Jess: Looks like I'm faaat!

339 But I'm not gonna be fat.

340 Ruth: Oh that's gonna be her skirt.

341 Jess: Uh huh.

342 (?)

343 Sam [just putting a new piece of colored paper on top of others
344 he's drawn]:

345 No one can color *this* guy's (?).

346 [no one responds]

347 Ruth: This is you, Jess.

348 See how pretty you are?

349 Jess [without looking up]: Uh huh.

.....

Topic Unit #9

350 Debra [looking up at Jess]:

351 But you're the fairy with the shortest hair.

352 Jess: No uh uh.

353 [Debra nods, yes]

354 Jess: No I'm not because. . .

355 [looks at Ruth, who has long hair.]

356 Please. . .

357 I want my hair long.

358 [reaches over and takes Debra's marker from her]

359 All right,

360 I'll tell you how long it should be.

361 I'll make it.

362 [draws more hair on Debra's figure]

363 Debra: Is that how long your hair is?

364 Jess: Yeah.

365 [When she finishes, she has made almost waist-length
366 tresses on the drawing. Debra scrutinizes it]

367 Debra: That's. . .

368 It's longer. . .

369 Your hair's not that long.

370 Jess: It *is*.

371 [feels her hair, which is short, page-boy cut]

372 [Sam has been watching this incident]

373 Ruth: Jess

374 how big do you wanna be?

375 Jess,

376 what age do you wanna be?

377 [Jess is still feeling her hair and looking at Debra.]

378 Jess: My hair's almost as long as yours is.

379 [Debra's hair is shoulder-length.]

380 Ruth [tapping Jess on the Shoulder]:

381 Jeesssss!

382 Jess [quickly leaning over to Ruth]:

383 What!

[This interruption takes Jess away from the issue of her hair and she doesn't return to it.]

Transcript, December 13

Block 3

Topic Unit #1

373 Ruth: Jess

374 how big do you wanna be?

375 Jess,

376 what age do you wanna be?

377 [Jess is still feeling her hair and looking at Debra.]

378 Jess: My hair's almost as long as yours is.

379 [Debra's hair is shoulder-length.]

380 Ruth [tapping Jess on the Shoulder]:

381 Jessss!

382 Jess [quickly leaning over to Ruth]:

383 What!

384 Ruth: What age do you wanna be?

385 This is you.

386 Jess: [asks a question. unclear]

387 Ruth: This is you.

388 What age do you wanna be?

389 Jess: How old do I wanna be?

390 Ruth: Yeah.

391 Jess: Um. . .

392 I wanna be. . .

393 *two*!

394 Ruth: Okay.

395 You can be the baby. . .

I'm gonna be the sister.
Nobody can be past seven. . .
because I wanna be. . .
I'm gonna be. . .
Nobody can be past eight
because I'm gonna be eight.

Topic Unit #2

Debra [working on her 3rd page now]:
Cindy this is you.
Ruth: But we're gonna do this at my birthday,
so I'm gonna save it. . .
Debra: Cindy you're gonna be. . .
Jess: Actually I'm drawing Debra first.
This is gonna be Debra.
Debra: And I'm little,
right?
Jess: No. . .
No one can. . .
All right. . .
The littlest age is. . .
four.
So who wants to be four?
Ruth: Me.
[Cindy raises her hand.
Then Ruth raises her hand. Both continue to work as they do this.]
Jess: Debra. . .
All right Debra. . .
Ruth gets to be four.

423 Cindy: I'll be five.

424 [Jess pauses and thinks.]

425 Jess: All right.

426 Debra: Cindy you have blue eyes

427 so I need blue.

428 Ruth: Jess.

429 Debra: What?

430 Ruth: I'm gonna do this at my birthday,

431 all right?

432 Jess: All right.

433 Can I come to your birthday?

434 Ruth: Yeah.

435 I'm inviting you.

436 Jess: Don't talk about (good?) things that other people will wanna come.

437 I'm making blonde hair.

438 Debra [looking down at her own drawing]: That's Cindy.

439 Jess: I'm making Ruth with blonde hair.

440 Ruth: You mean. . .

441 that's me?

442 Now I'm gonna make me.

443 Jess: uh huh.

444 Ruth: Now I'm gonna make me.

445 Jess: There,

446 that's Ruth and she's gonna be. . .

447 four.

448 I have to keep reminding myself.

449 Ruth wants to be four.

450 Four.

451		[makes a numeral four over head of picture]
452		And then I'll draw *me*.
453		Actually,
454		the littlest age is. . .
455		two.
456	Ruth	[raising hand quickly]:
457		I wanna be two!
458	Cindy	[simultaneously with Ruth]:
459		I wanna be two!
460	Jess:	I'm two.
461	Debra	[overlapped with Jess]:
462		We're gonna be so silly because
463		we climb out our secret window
464		and our father and mother don't know where we are.
465	Jess	[not listening to Debra, still on the age issue]:
466		I'm two.
467		I'm two I'm two.
468		Who wants to be three?
469	Ruth:	Me.
470	Jess:	You're four,
471		Ruth.
472		[looks at Cindy as she speaks]:
473		Who wants to be. . .
474	Cindy:	Me.
475	Jess:	All right.
476		I'll be two and you'll be three.
477		And Debra's gonna be the oldest.
478		She's gonna be five.
479		I'm gonna draw me next.

[someone—Cindy?—says something unclear. Jess bumps Ruth again as she reaches across the table for a marker.]

Ruth: Jesssss!

Jess [smiling at Ruth]: I just can't reach the markers.

[Brings can closer to her as Ruth erases the mistake.]

Now I can reach the markers.

[Sam starts to move can back. Jess grabs one quickly.]

Hey I need purple.

[Sam stops while she gets it, then slides can back where it was, then slides it slightly closer to Jess.]

Oh oh

I forgot to draw. . .

I forgot to draw your wings.

Oh dear.

[draws wings of picture of Ruth.]

I'll draw me.

I'm the littlest.

Cuz I'm two.

[Both Ruth and Sam are watching her throughout her talk.]

Actually this is not me.

This is the babiest fairy.

This is the babiest fairy.

Who wants to be. . .

the babiest fairy?

[looks up expectantly. There's a pause before anyone speaks.]

Cindy: Me.

Jess: All right.

Cindy's gonna be the babiest fairy.

Without wings.

Cuz she's too little to have wings.

510 [Ruth says something unclear about wings.]

511 She has a little bit of hair.

512 There that's the babiest fairy.

513 I'm gonna build a . . .

514 [glancing up at Cindy]

515 That's the babiest fairy.

516 [Sitting up, looking at Cindy]

517 Cindy wants to be the babiest fairy.

518 The babiest fairy is one month old.

519 One. . .

520 mmm . . . .aaa . . . nth . . .

521 o . . . o . . . old . . .

522 Ruth & Jess [simultaneously]:

523 one month.

524 Jess: [looks at Ruth and laughs]

525 mooonth oooold.

526 Cindy's one month old.

Transcript, December 13

Block 4

Topic Unit #1

527 Sam: [asks Jess something, but it's unclear.]

528 [Jess glances at Sam, but doesn't respond to him.]

529 Jess [looking at Ruth]:

530 (?) the seeecret doooor.

531 Ruth: Jess,

532 have you seen the

533 movie?

534 Jess: What dark crystal?

535 Ruth: It's *The Dark Crystal*.

536 We sa. . .

537 It's *so* good.

538 Jess [shaking head]: No.

539 Ruth: I did.

540 It's so good.

541 Jess: You should get *The White* (?).

542 [exaggerating lips]

543 It was sooo good.

544 There was this magic land and he found it

545 and you know what?

546 He called a wal. . .

547 he called. . .

548 he called a whal. . .

549 he called a whale, *dolphin*,

550 hah! hah!

551 Because his mother told him

552 whoever had a flat tail was a dolphin.

553 hee hee.

554 So he thought a whal [sic] was a dolphin.

555 Seven and a half feet long.

.....

Topic Unit #2

556 Ruth [not looking up]:

557 Whoa.

558 [pointing to picture in booklet]

559 That's you.

560 I make everybody with ruffles on them.

561 Jess: I'm gonna make me now.

562 [work pause]

563 [Ruth says something inaudible, without looking up.]

.....

Topic Unit #3

565 Jess [loudly]:

566 Wonder who wants to be the prin. . .

567 who wants to be the king?

568 569 [looks straight ahead and wiggles head back and forth, mouth pursed.]

570 [Looks at Sam.]

571 Ruth: You'll have to ask one of the boooyyyyys.

572 Jess [looking directly at Sam]:

573 Sam d'you wanna be the king?

574 [Sam looks at her and thinks for a minute.]

575 Sam: Naw.

576 Jess: Nope?

577 Sam [shaking head]: Nope.

578 [Jess looks toward block area]

579 Sam: Ask another boy,

580 Jess [putting chin in hands]:

581 Hmmmm.

582 I think James.

583 I'll go ask him.

584 [Sam gets up and leaves table, as though to go ask James himself.]

585 [Jess is closer to block area. She turns and calls to James]

586 Jess: James.

587 At my show d'you wanna be the king?

588 [James comes over, stands for a minute, thinks, makes a face.]

589 James: Okay.

590 Jess: All right.

591 goes back to drawing.]

592 Draw you next.

593 Cindy [turning to James]:

594 In my story do you wanna be king?

595 James: Yeaup.

596 [Cindy says something to James, who's back in the blocks, about a
597 long time to go. . ., inaudible because she has her back to mike.]

598 Jess: No he does not.

599 [pause]

Topic Unit #4

600 We're going to do it out. . .

601 when we. . .

602 [turns to look at schedule]

603 when. . .

604 Its. . .

605 sharing time.

606 Ruth [pointing to something in her drawing]:

607 Jess don't you like the key?

608 Jess [getting out of her seat and heading for block area, says over her
609 shoulder]:

610 Yeah.

.....

Topic Unit #5

611 Sam [sitting back and looking at his drawing]:

612 The monster.

613 [speaking to no one in particular, still looking at his picture]:

614 D'you think this would be hard to feed (?)?

.....

Topic Unit #6

615 [Debra's just come over to Jess's empty seat and, standing, opens
616 her booklet to first page to show Ruth. Ruth leans over to look.]

617 Debra: Ruth,

618 [pointing to figure on first page]

619 That's Debra.

620 That's me.

621 [turns to second page as Ruth speaks]

622 [Sam stands, lifts his sheaf of papers and says something to the

girls, whose backs are turned. Taps his papers as he talks.]

[The girls continue to look at Debra's book.]

Ruth: Can I be somebody in it?

Debra [pointing to figure on second page]:

Jess.

[flips to third page and touches picture]

Cindy.

Ruth: Where's me?

Sam [breaking into the girls interchange]:

Ruth,

[taps his pictures, but Ruth is still looking at Debra.]

Debra [sits across from Ruth as she answers Ruth's question]:

I didn't make you.

[Ruth, distracted from Debra's response by Sam, turns to him and smiles. He explains something indecipherable to her. Ruth acknowledges him visually, but doesn't respond verbally. He sits down and begins drawing again as Jess returns to the table.]

Jess: Now we can have plays,

Ruth!

Now we can have plays.

I can't wait until we have the plays.

Debra: [Drawing a figure on the page where 'Cindy' is]:

This is Ruth.

Transcript, March 7

Block 1

Topic Unit #1

646 At the writing table: Ruth, Tisha, & Daisy.

647 Tisha is working on a picture of a deer in her "Signs of Spring
648 Book." To accompany her pictures, she copies words from the
649 teacher's list of 'signs of spring,' posted on the wall behind her,
650 that the class brainstormed on a previous day.

1 Ruth [looking at Tisha,

2 who is looking at her work]:

3 Y'know what?

4 Sometimes deers come near my house.

5 Tisha [glancing up at her]:

6 Ya know what?

7 Ruth: [looking at Tisha]:

8 What?

9 Tisha: I thought a mother deer hollered at her baby deer . . .

10 Ruth [interrupting]:

11 So have we!

12 They always come to our house.

13 Tisha: But he was at my grandfather's house and

14 [leans right up to Ruth's face]

15 and he was peeking right in the window.

16 Ruth: One time a deer—

17 well,

18 two deers,

19 they went right by the swimming pool.

20 They were so close to our house.

21 They're so close to our house.

22 They're *so* close to our house.

.....

Topic Unit #2

23 Jess [announcing intention to change activities, from rug area
24 behind Ruth]:

25 I'm gonna do writing.

26 Ruth [turning around and addressing Jess]:

27 Jess,

28 d'you wanna be in my play?

29 [can't see/hear Jess's response].

30 Debra [not visible]: Can I be in your play, too?

31 Ruth [turning back to work, looks over 7 fairies now drawn]:

32 [interrupting Debra's last word] OH,

33 you can be . . .

34 Debra [leaning over Ruth, saying in her ear]:

35 . . . the littlest.

36 Ruth [finishing her sentence, above, and placing pen on one fairy]:

37 three.

38 [Debra and Jess on rug, changing their sign-up tags]

39 Ruth [turning around, facing Jess and Debra]:

40 Jess?

41 You wanna be in my play?

42 [response not seen.]

43 You can be . . .

44 two.

45 All right,

46 Jess?

47 You can be two.

48 Jess: I wanna be one.

49 Ruth [turning back to booklet]:

50 All right,

51 you can be one.

52 [Debra comes over to Ruth]

53 Ruth [to Debra]: Okay,

54 you can be two [pointing to fairy],

55 Jess's one.

56 You're two,

57 Jess's one.

58 I'm four.

59 Nobody can go past the end of four.

60 I'm four.

.....

Topic Unit #3

61 Debra [now seated, shuffling through the booklets on table labelled
62 'Signs of Spring']:

63 Is there any books?

64 Ruth: The books are over there.

65 [Tisha has looked up at Debra during this exchange.]

66 Debra [out of sight]: Stamps?

67 [Debra comes to table with container of stamps. Before sitting down
68 next to Jess, she addresses her.]

.....

Topic Unit #4

69 Debra: Jess,

70 d'you wanna be in my play?

71 [Jess shakes head, no.]

72 Debra: D'you wanna be the littlest one or the biggest one?

73 [Jess's response neither visible or audible].

74 Debra: I'm gonna be the littlest but there's two just babies.

75 I'm gonna be one and you're gonna be one,

76 ok?

77 Actually I'm gonna be zero months old.

78 D'you wanna be zero months old?

79 [Jess nods, yes.]

80 Debra: Okay.

81 Ruth: If you're zero months old then you're not four.

82 Debra: But we're just pretending in the story.

.....

Topic Unit #5

83 Ruth: Can I be in your play?

84 Debra: Yes,

85 but you have to be the big sister if you want in the play.

86 Ruth: Whyyyyy?

87 Debra: Because Jess and me already picked them.

88 Ruth: Then you have to be three in my play.

89 Debra: What?

90 Ruth: Then you hafta be three in my play.

91 Debra: Okay.

92 [pointing to Ruth] You'll be. . .

93 How bout you'll be . . .

94 eight?

95 Ruth: Okay.

96 And you'll be three in my play.

97 Debra: No. (?)

98 How bout. . .

99 you wanna be four?

100 [inviting facial expression]

101 Ruth: Okay.

102 How bout . . . {not clear}

103 You're gonna be three.

104 [Jess watching exchange]

105 Jess: *two*.

106 Debra: Okay but I . . .

107 Ruth [interrupting]:

108 No,

109 you're one,

110 remember?

111 [Jess nods].

112 Ruth: You wanted to be the littlest.

113 Jess: Yeah,

114 I'm one.

115 Debra: Could I . . .

116 Then I'll be two.

117 That's big.

118 [pause as Debra looks at Ruth]

119 ok,

120 you wanna be three,

121 Ruth?

122 Ruth: Yes.

123	Debra:	Okay,
124		but Ruth,
125		you're gonna . . .
126		Because you . . .
127		Pretend you were really little,
128		but,
129		um,
130		but you really took care of us,
131		right?
132		Because we're gonna be littler than you.
133	Ruth:	Okay.

Transcript, March 7

Block 2

Topic Unit #1

134 Debra: If I could only find the fairy.

.....

Topic Unit #2

135 Jess [looking at Ruth]: D'you wanna be in my play?

136 Debra [answering before Ruth]:

137 Yes,

138 could I be the littlest?

139 [Jess looks sharply at Debra]

140 Ruth: Could I be the littlest?

141 Jess: It's not about people.

142 Ruth: All right. . .

143 Jess: It's about puppies.

144 Debra: I'll be . . .

145 Ruth: I wanna be the littlest in Jess's play about the puppies.

146 [Debra looks unhappy as she speaks]

147 Jess [speaking quickly]:

148 *I'm* the littlest in the play about puppies

149 [takes a quick, loud breath signaling she has more to say]

150 Debra: And can I be the se. . .

151 Ruth and Debra [simultaneously]: And can I be the second littlest?

152 Jess [cutting in hastily]:

153 All right,

154		[pointing with marker to Ruth]
155		Ruth can be the second littlest
156		[then, waving marker toward Debra, but not looking at her. . .]
157		You'll be the third littlest.
158	Debra:	Am I old?
159	Jess:	Three.
160	Ruth:	And how big am I gonna be?
161	Debra:	But I asked first, Jess.
162	Jess:	Two.
163	Debra:	But Jess, I asked first.
164	Jess	[slaps book open and snatches cap off marker]:
165		It's my book. . . .
166		And the littlest is the prettiest,
167		I can tell you that. . . .
168		The biggest is,
169		um,
170		the prettiest.

Topic Unit #3

171	Debra:	I'm the prettiest fairy in my story,
172		though.
173		Me and Jess are the prettiest
174		[looking at Ruth]
175		because you have to be in black,
176		Ruth
177		[penetrating look at Ruth]
178	Ruth	(questionable audio pick-up): I don't like black.
179	Jess:	How bout she's always in black,
180		but she has,

181		but she has the crown that's not black?
182	Debra	[smiling]: Right.
183		But pretend that,
184		um,
185		you had to wear the black dress because if you took it off,
186		If you,
187		um,
188		never weared it again,
189		you ha. . .,
190		you'd le. . .,
191		the witch would capture you. . .
192	Ruth:	Nooo
193	Debra:	and put a spell.
194		That's the story.
195	Ruth	[protesting tone]: Noooo.
196	Jess:	Yes,
197		because you're probably pretty.
198	Debra:	And our crow. . .
199		our. . .
200		we won't even. . .
201		we'll. . .
202		we'll. . .
203		we'll. . .
204		we'll have a tiny crown.
205		(Pause)

Topic Unit #4

206 Jess [drawing]: The littlest is the prettiest in my story.

.....

Topic Unit #5

207 Ruth: I'm making you so small,

208 Jess.

209 [giggles]

210 Debra: Can I. . .

211 Can I be small,

212 too,

213 Ruth?

214 Ruth: Jess.

215 I mean Debra. I just

216 need to write Jess small because I need a small window.

217 That's why.

218 You're still,

219 um,

220 two.

Transcript, March 7

Block 3

Topic Unit #1

221	Debra:	I. . .
222		I'm. . .
223		This is gonna be you,
224		Jess.
225	[Jess caps marker and leans over to look]	
226		This is Ruth and this is us.
227	Jess	[rubbing closed marker on one of Debra's stamped fairies]:
228		This is me.
229	Debra:	No,
230		*that's* you.
231		This is Ruth.
232	Jess:	All right,
233		and that's me.
234	Debra:	No,
235		that's *me*.
236	Jess:	(?) they're all the same.

Topic Unit #2

237		That's me [marker on another fairy]
238	Debra:	and this is me. . .
239		and this is me and Ruth's in the middle, right?
240		[looking at Jess.]

241 [Jess nods and starts drawing again.]

242 Debra [speaking while coloring a fairy]:No,

243 actua. . .

244 But I'm gonna be beautiful.

245 Jess [drawing as she talks]: How bout we're the beautifulest.

246 Debra [looking up at Ruth as she speaks quickly]:

247 Yeah,

248 we're the beautifulest,

249 Ruth.

250 (work pause)

.....

Topic Unit #3

251 Debra [looking toward Ruth]: Oh,

252 can I. . .

253 [gets up and reaches to marker tray near Ruth. Gets a pink
254 that's generally a favorite, often hoarded]

.....

Topic Unit #4

255 Jess [as she colors]: I'm colorful,

256 but nobody else is.

257 Debra [holding pink marker toward Jess]:

258 I'm gonna. . .

259 This is my color crown.

260 Jess [not acknowledging Debra's comment or gesture,

261 points her marker at Debra without looking up]:

262 All right,

263 you're the littlest.

264 Debra [sitting down, but keeping eyes on Jess]:

265 Am I the littlest in your story?

266 Jess [looking up at Debra and exchanging markers]:

267 No,

268 I'm the littlest and you're the second.

269 Debra [starts coloring, head down, as she speaks]:

270 Ruth,

271 I'm the second littlest in Jess's story.

272 Jess [drawing as she speaks, eyes don't rise]:

273 Ru. . .

274 um,

275 Debra,

276 don't be a brag about who's the littlest or who isn't or (?).

.....

Topic Unit #5

277 Debra: Jess, you're gonna be. . .

278 Jess [looking at her drawing]: That's me!

279 I'm the littlest.

..... end of Topic Unit #4

280 Debra: Jess,

281 you're gonna have the same color dress as me n'cept,

282 um,

283 you like. . .

284 except we wanted different dresses,

285 right?

286 Jess: No.

287 Debra: Okay,

288 we wanted the same.

289 [Jess watches Debra draw. Hums, marker in mouth]

290 Jess: There.

291 That's me!

292 Ummm. . . [reaching for another marker]

293 Debra [looking up at Jess]:

294 I'm gonna have brown hair.

295 I'm gonna. . .

296 Jess [interrupting Debra]: Debra.

297 Debra: Yeah?

298 Jess: You're gonna be the next one I'll (?).

299 You're gonna be pretty, too.

300 But I'm the prettiest.

301 [Both working quietly, then Jess hums as she works]

302 Debra: But we didn't have crowns.

303 Jess: You have a longer tail than me.

304 Debra [looking up at Jess]: Why?

305 Jess: Cuz you're a little bit bigger than me.

306 . . . So. . .

307 you have a bigger tail than me.

308 Debra: Do you know that my birthday's one week away from my bir. . .

309 My birthday's only one week away.

310 Jess [tapping the picture]: So you're bigger than me.

311 Debra: Why?

312 Jess: Because.

313 You sai. . .

314 Because you're two and I'm one.

315 . . .Actuall. . .

Transcript, March 7

Block 4

Topic Unit #1

316	Debra	[leaning over toward Jess, interrupting]:
317		No,
318		Jess.
319		My birthday is from. . .
320		I. . . I. . . I. . .
321		My mom wrote my list already because my birthday is ten,
322		um,
323		three weeks,
324		um,
325		two weeks away.
326	Jess	[while Debra saying the last words]: Am I coming?
327	Debra:	Yeah.
328	Jess:	You came to my birthday.
329	Debra:	You know what?
330		Ruth,
331		I. . .
332		I don't. . .
333		I. . .
334		I forget if Ruth's coming or not.
335	Jess:	No,
336		I cou. . .
337 338		I didn't invite you because you were on a trip when I had my birthday.

339 Debra: Right.

340 Jess: But I couldn't.

341 Debra: I went to,

342 uh. . .

343 um,

344 you know what I did . . .

345 Jess: You went to Barbuda in a boat and it was a terrible time and
346 you got sick.

347 That's what I heard [overlaps with Debra's first words]

348 Debra: Yeah,

349 I got seasick and I threw up.

350 Jess: Yes.

351 Debra: My parents did, too.

352 Jess: Yeah.

353 Over the boat?

354 Debra: It was so gross.

355 I saw my daddy and mom throw up.

356 Jess: It was a terrible night cuz it was sooo rough!

357 [waved arm and body to illustrate]

358 Debra: Yeah,

359 so. . .

360 No that was in the morning.

361 Jess: Yeah it was real rough.

.....

Topic Unit #2

362 Debra: This is Ruth.

363 [smiles and looks up at Ruth.

364 Points to fairy that she's just colored *pink]*.

365 That's you.

366 Jess [pointing to partially finished puppy, addressing Debra]:

367 That's you.

368 You don't have any colors.

369 [Debra continued to look at Ruth while Jess spoke. Ruth gets out of
370 seat and comes over to look more closely.]

371 Jess [speaking as she, too, leans over to look at Debra's drawing]:

372 Well,

373 you have *some*. . .

374 Debra [addressing Ruth]: This is you.

375 Jess [overlapping Debra's words]: You're pink!

376 You're pink,

377 Ruth.

378 [Kyle, who joined the table awhile ago, sitting next to Debra, also
379 stands and leans over to see]

380 Debra: This is you,

381 Ruth.

382 Ruth: Why am I all pink?

383 Debra: Well,

384 you'll. . .

385 all pink because you had you magic wand,

386 and there was some smoke coming—

387 your magic spell.

388 So you turned pink in this story.

389 [Ruth goes back to her seat as Debra says last words.]

Topic Unit #3

390 Jess [grabbing the pink marker in Debra's hand]:

391 Can I have it pleeese?

392 Debra [resisting Jess's pull]:

393 After meeee.

394 Now where did that fairy-poo go? [referring to stamp]

395 Jess [distorting the word]: The fairy pau?

396 Debra: The fairy. . . [stooping to floor]

397 There you are you bad. . .

398 Debra: You're bad,

399 now stay,

400 or I'll drop you.

Topic Unit #4

401 Jess: You're pink.

402 You're not as pretty as I am, though.

403 Debra: Is Ruth the. . .

404 Is Ruth. . .

405 Ruth's second after.

406 [looking at Ruth]

407 No.

408 Ruth,

409 you're the secondest cuz you're the oldest,

410 that means in my story.

411 Ruth [briefly holding up her booklet with the two fairies on the
412 second page]:

413 Here's Debra.

414 Debra [looking toward Ruth]:

415 I love when I get to be the littlest in my story.

416 Jess [finishing coloring]: There!

417 There's you.

418 That's you,

419		Debra.
420		That's you.
421	Debra	[barely glancing at Jess's work]: Wow.
422		I'm pretty.
423	Ruth:	Can I see?
424	Jess:	Yeah,
425		and I'm real pretty.
426 427		[Picks up booklet and faces it toward Ruth. Points to puppies, in turn]
428		This is Debra and that's me.
429	Ruth:	When are you gonna make me?
430	Jess:	(unclear sentence—"I'm going to. . ." ??)
431		But you're the mom
432		[looks at Ruth penetratingly].
433	Debra	[overlaps with Jess's statements above]: I'm. . .
434		I'm in the middle
435		[looks at Ruth]
436 437	Debra	[standing and looking at Jess's booklet, which she's turning back to the first page]:
438		So you have to be old,
439		I bet.
440 441	Jess	[overlapping Debra's last words and holding up the first page to show Ruth the puppy drawn there]:
442		That's you.
443		But you're the prettiest
444		[smiles invitingly].
445	Ruth:	Why?
446	Jess:	Because you're the mom and mom's the prettiest.
447	Ruth:	Are you gonna color me in?
448	Jess:	[Nods, yes, then stands].
449		[Loudly]

450		I'm the prettiest!
451	Debra	[overlapping with Jess, above]: I'm in the middle, though.
452	Jess	[sitting]: If you wanna be the mom,
453		you have to be the prettiest. . . .
454		And then you get to be the prettiest.
455		But first you have us [turns page briefly] in your tummy
456		[looks directly at Ruth as she speaks].

Transcript, March 7

Block 5

Topic Unit #1

457 Debra: Oops.

458 [Jess looks at her with interest]

459 Brenda had a baby once, but John (?) didn't want to have a
460 baby so Brenda had to have a operation.

461 Jess [standing and coming face to face with Debra, who has been
462 standing as she worked]:

463 Why did Brenda have to have a operation?

464 Debra: Because,

465 um,

466 she. . .

467 because the babies were in her stomach and she didn't want
468 any babies.

469 [Jess leans on elbow as she listens to this.]

470 Jess: Oh.

.....

Topic Unit #2

471 Debra [tapping the three fairies on the first page of her booklet
472 with the pink marker]

473 This is me and this is you and this is Carolyn.

474 Jess [grabbing pink marker from Debra as she starts to put it back
475 in the tray,

476 who doesn't resist]:

477 I need that pink.

478 Debra: The witch is gonna be told. . .

.....

Topic Unit #3

479 Ruth: You know, you don't have wings yet.
480 But you have a little bit of magic so you can still fly.
481 Jess: Yeah that's because if I couldn't fly,
482 I couldn't go with you on special trips, where you had to go East.
483 Debra [fishing for another stamp]: But I could go. . .
484 I could fly, too,
485 right?
486 Ruth: Not that well, yet.
487 But I could fly the fastest.

.....

Topic Unit #4

488 Debra [stamping]: Brenda {sic},
489 you have to be caugh. . .
490 captured in this story.
491 Jess [looking up at Ruth]: Yeah,
492 you have to be captured in her story.
493 But you're not gonna be captured in *my* story.
494 Debra [facing Ruth]: Yeah,
495 but you're not gonna die.
496 Then you. . .
497 then we're so scared. . .
498 then you. . .
499 then you got. . .
500 we were hiding so the witch just couldn't find us,

501 right?

502 Jess: Right.

503 Cuz we were very good hiders.

504 Debra [alternating stamping and looking at Ruth as she speaks]:
505 Yeah,

506 but you were. . .

507 we hided in a small place,

508 but you weren't very. . .

509 you were good hiding,

510 but you. . .

511 you were just too big so you couldn't hide in our special spot

512 right?. [sits and starts coloring as she says last words]

513 Jess: Right.

514 But we. . .

515 but we told you a place to hide that was (inaud).

516 Debra: But. . .

517 but it. . .

518 but then it was the witch's attic,

519 but then she found her,

520 right?

521 Jess: Right.

522 But there. . .

523 But there's a witch in my story and *we* creep to the witch and
524 Ruth doesn't.

525 She tries to get us back, but she can't.

Topic Unit #5

526 Debra [leaning over to look at Jess's drawing]: Who's that?

527 Jess: Our mo. . .

528 our mother.

529 Ruth's the mother.

530 And she's the prettiest.

Topic Unit #6

531 Ruth [holding up the last page of her booklet on which she has
532 started a drawing]:

533 Here's my caaage.

534 This is my cage.

535 Jess [looking at it fully]: It's pretty.

536 Ruth: It's going to be even prettier.

Topic Unit #7

537 Debra: And we. . .

538 we stoled some of the witch's magic,

539 so we are like you.

540 Then we go back to the house

541 [turns to next blank page and starts fresh drawing. Stamps 3
542 fairies]

543 I'm gonna be in the middle.

544 [to Jess] But now you. . .

545 but now you turn two,
546 ok?

547 I'll (probably?) be two, too.

548 Jess [wrinkling nose and shaking head]: No.

549 We're both one.

550	Debra:	All right.
551		I'll be (inaud).
552		*The End*
553		[puts last flourish on pict.]
554		That. . .
555		I like that story.
556		[turns to last page and starts to draw on inside back cover]
557		Now all I have to do is make the hut.

.....

Topic Unit #8

558	Jess	[holding up her booklet for Ruth to see]:
559		How do you like you so far?
560	Ruth:	Nice.
561 562	Jess	[put booklet down, then picked it up again and turned it toward Ruth as she spoke]:
563		I'll show you.
564		Ruth,
565		how you look so far.
566	Ruth:	Nice.
567	Jess:	But you hafta have a little bit of black on you.

.....

Topic Unit #9

568	Debra:	Do you wanna be in my play,
569		Jess?
570		My different play?
571	Jess:	Yes.
572	Debra:	Okay,

573		I'm the littlest, then.
574	Jess	[somewhat hesitant body language, and lower voice]: I'm the. . .
575		I'm the littlest sister.
576	Debra	[leaning closer to Jess] What?
577	Jess	[retreating?]: We're both the same age.
578	Debra	[still leaning toward Jess]: Yeah. . . .
579		[standing and facing Ruth]
580		And Ruth you ha. . .
581		Ruth,
582		you wanna be the mom in the play?
583		You hafta be the mom in the play.
584		[goes to supply shelves for new booklet]
585	Debra	[returned]: The play at (inaud)
586	Jess:	And the play's gonna be at my house.
587	Debra:	Can I go to it?
588	Ruth:	Can I go to it?
589	Jess:	All right.
590		And it's on Thursday (inaud).
591		Actually it's on Fri. . .
592		It's on Sunday.
593		My play is on Sunday, March 13th.
594		Maybe not March 13th,
595		but it's on Fri. . .
596		but it's on Sunday.
597 598	[Teacher announcement indicating end of period coming up. Girls continue finishing drawings.]	
599	Jess:	The end.
600		I finished my story.
601		Just in time.
602		[gets up with booklet and walks over to Ruth, who's picking

603		up markers.
604		Shows Ruth the pict of the 'mom' dog]
605		Ruth, how do you like you?
606	Ruth	[looking at pict]: Nice.

Transcript, April 2

Block 1

Topic Unit #1

Writing table crowded. Animal stamps had been introduced a couple of days before and are out. Popular. Stamps are being used to label animals in the 'zoo' in the block area. It's also Debra's birthday.

Ruth [showing Jess her picture.

Debra, in middle, looks at the picture, but Jess does not look up.]:

Jess, here's you.

Now I'm gonna make me underneath the butterfly.

Debra [overlapping with Ruth's last words]:

Okay,

now you wanna be the bunny next?

Where's the bunny?

[leaning over stamp tray]

Ruth [overlapping with Debra's last sentence]:

This one's Debra.

Debra.

This one's you.

[indicates the figure she had a moment ago designated as Jess

Debra [glancing quickly]:

Pretty.

Ruth: Now I'm gonna make me underneath the butterfly.

22 Cindy: Guess what I'm making for you, Debra?
23 Ruth: What?
24 Cindy: A book.
25 Debra: Oh, nice.
26 Cindy,
27 I have a present for you when I get home.
28 You know what it is?
29 It's a beeeuuuu. . .
30 Peter [interrupting Debra]:
31 Don't tell if you want. . .
32 Debra [interrupting Peter]:
33 I'm gonna give presents to all of you guys, though.
34 Peter: Me also?
35 Debra [nodding]: Yup.
36 Peter: All the kids in the class?
37 Debra [looking slightly doubtful, shrugging]:
38 Well. . .
39 Actually I forgot what I. . .
40 actually I can't give everybody,
41 but when I go on the next trip I'm gonna give something to my
42 best best mommy because she's so nice to me.
43 That's who I was talking about.
44 Jess: No one's best.
45 You like everyone.
46 Everyone's different.
47 That's what she means.
48 Debra: Yeah,
49 everyone's different,
50 but because my mom and dad gave me a nice present,

51 they gave me this,

52 and I feel sorry for them that I didn't give them a present,

53 so I wanted to give them a present.

54 Right, Jess?

55 Jess: Right.

56 Peter: I know.

57 Jess: Cuz when we were sleeping over,

58 you told me that,

59 right?

60 [Michelle leans over and says something to Debra but it's inaudible.
61 Ruth responds to her, also inaudible because Debra's voice overrules]

62 Debra: Yeah

63 Jess: When we were sleeping over,

64 you told me.

.....

65 Debra [looking at her stamped picture]: Jess, this is Ru. . .

66 This is the mommy elephant.

67 [Jess doesn't look up.]

68 Debra leans toward Jess.

69 Debra: This is Ruth, Jess.

70 [Jess looks at elephant, then at Ruth, who is talking to Michelle.]

71 Jess: Ruth, you're a elephant!

72 [Ruth, engrossed in conversation, gives a momentary glance, then
73 back to Michelle, who has leaned closer to her as she continues
74 talking.]

75 Debra: [looking at her booklet as she speaks]

76 Ruth, you're a elephant.

77 Jess [loudly, leaning around Debra's back to get Ruth's attention]:

78 Ruth, you're a elephant.

79 [Ruth looks over her shoulder at Jess and smiles wanly. Mouths
80 something inaudible]

81 Debra: You're a elephant.

82 You're a mommy elephant.

83 Ruth: I don't want to.

84 I. . . I said I wanted to be a baby seal.

85 Debra [coloring the elephant]: No. . .

86 You. . .

87 I made the seal character already

88 but.

89 Peter [interrupting, looking for seal in tray]:

90 Where is the seal?

91 Debra [ignoring interruption and continuing]:

92 um. . .

93 actually this will be. . .

94 this will be . . .

95 Peter [simultaneously with Debra's last line]:

96 Where is the seal?

97 Debra [to Peter]:

98 I did it already.

99 Peter [still looking in tray]: I know,

100 but I just wanta know where the seal is.

101 [Debra ignores Peter's question.]

102 Debra [looking up at Michelle]:

103 Michelle

104 D'you wanna be the mom in my play?

105 Michelle [not looking up from her drawing]:

106 Sure.

107 Debra: Okay.

108 Michelle's the mom.

Transcript, April 2

Block 2

Topic Unit #1

109	Peter	[searching in the tray]:
110		Seal, seal.
111	Cindy:	Can I be the baby sister?
112	Peter	[finding the seal stamp]:
113		Seal!
114		I got the seal.
115		Found the seal.
116	Debra	[looking up at Cindy]:
117		Um. . .
118		the seal?
119	Cindy:	Yeah.
120	Debra:	I mean. . .
121		of the elephant?
122	[Cindy looks up at Debra]	
123	Debra:	because I did the sea. . .
124		I did the seals already.
125	Cindy:	I wanna be the *baby* elephant.
126	Debra:	Yeah you're a baby elephant.
127	Cindy	[smiling]:
128		Okay

Topic Unit #2

129 Ruth [drawing third figure to left]:

130 Now I'm gonna make you, Jess.

.....

Topic Unit #3

131 Debra [looking at her work]: Cindy,

132 you're gonna be the tiniest.

133 me and you. . .

134 all of us. . .

135 Jess: I wanna be the tiniest too.

136 Ruth: Me too.

137 Debra: Well Cindy never. . .

138 well, um. . .

139 In that story you're gonna be the tiniest and Cindy never got
140 to be the tiniest in my play.

141 Ruth: I'm eeeeither!

142 Michelle [leaning forward toward Debra]:

143 No,

144 *never* got to be a *chance* to be the tiniest.

145 Ruth [interrupting Michelle, direct eye contact with Debra and hand
146 gesture for emphasis]:

147 I never get to do, either.

148 Jess [gesturing with marker at Ruth]:

149 Yes you do. . .

150 sometimes you do. . .

151 and they have never. . .

152 they only have one chance. . .

153 you have about. . .

154 about *two*.

155 Michelle [overlapping with Jess, leaning over to Cindy]:
156 Debra gets to be the littlest because she's the birthday girl.
157 Ruth [frowning]: I only had *one* chance!
158 [slaps hand on paper and goes back to drawing]
159 Jess: They had *no* chances.
160 Ruth: Well, I had no chances either.
161 Jess: I saw you have two chances, Ruth.
162 You had two chances.
163 [Ruth doesn't look up from her work.]
164 Debra: I guess. . .
165 Yeah. . .
166 You and you [indicating Cindy and Michelle] had none
167 and the other three. . .
168 those only got to have zero.
169 And I feel sorry for you guys.

Topic Unit #4

170 Peter: I'm not even *being part* of the play.
171 Debra: Yeah
172 because
173 If Peter doesn't want. . .
174 If he *wants* to he can,
175 but if he doesn't want to he doesn't have to.
176 Peter: I'm not even making this story,
177 this is just the cover of my story.
178 Ruth: This is just the cover of mine.

179 Jess: Ruth, do you want to be the baby in my story?

180 Ruth: 'Kay.

181 Debra [coming in quickly]:

182 Okay, Ruth,

183 Okay

184 All of you guys will be the littlest.

185 And this is Michelle.

186 No Michelle. . .

187 Actually this has to be. . .

188 this has to be. . .

189 Jenna.

190 She's my friend.

191 Jess: And probably she always gets to be the littlest.

192 Debra: Yeah,

193 she always gets to be the littlest, Jenna

194 so she can be. . .

195 Jess: I know why Debra always gets to be the littlest.

196 Ruth [smiling and shrugging]:

197 Yeah cuz it's *her story*!

198 Debra [smiling]:

199 Yeah. . .

200 Michelle [interrupting]:

201 But she. . .

202 [gesturing toward Debra's paper]

203 but *she's* gonna be the littlest!

204 Debra's *gonna* be the littlest b'cause *she's*. . .

205 [Michelle can't get out what she wants to say because others are
206 also talking. Stands up and raises both hands for attention.]

207 Debra's. . .

208	Debra:	Yeah
209		because it's my birthday today.
210	Michelle:	Stop!
211		[gesturing at Debra]:
212		*You're* the birthday girl.
213		*You* get to be the littlest.
214		*No*body else!
215	Ruth:	Over at my place,
216		I always be the biggest.
217	Peter:	I always be the. . .
218		I have never had a plays.
219	Jess:	I had a play. . .
220		I was a reindeer in the Nutcracker Suite.

Transcript, April 2

Block 3

Topic Unit #1

221 Jess: I love being a reindeer in the Nutcracker Suite.

222 An. . . an. . .

223 I was like. . .

224 huuuh?

225 [Ruth holds up her drawing to show Jess, though Jess is involved in
226 the Nutcracker conversation]

227 Ruth [over the other conversation]:

228 Jess, this is you.

229 Cindy: I didn't know my mother signed me up for the Nutcracker.

230 I went [puts hands on side of her head].

Topic Unit #2

231 Ruth: Jess. . .

232 [Jess looks at Ruth's drawing]

233 Ruth: This is you, Jess.
234 [pointing to the 1st figure on the right, which started out
235 as Jess, then became Debra, and is now Jess again.]

236 Jess: Wasn't it. . .

237 wasn't it. . .

238 It's *boring* to be a reindeer. . .

239 you have to stay downstairs all the time til *midnight*!

240 Cindy: I know.

241 Jess: It's dumb.

242 Cindy [standing, dancing as she talks]:

243 Yeah you just go out and pick up Laurel and then you go
244 back and pick up Laurel.

245 Debra: Yeah and. . . and. . .

246 Laurel gets to be able to visit downstairs.

247 No fair for the reindeer.

248 But you know what?

249 My mom said I didn't need to be a reindeer.

250 Jess: I don't believe you.

251 Your mother said she didn't. . .

252 [inaudible moments]

253 Peter: But she's the birthday girl.

254 She's the *birthday* girl.

255 Jess: Yeah, but. . .

256 you have to get there real early

257 and probably you can't get there real early.

258 Debra: Yeah my mom said we will.

259 Cindy: Don't talk about home things!

260 Jess: Yeah

261 and it even makes me sad

262 *right now*!

263 [puts marker right into Debra's face]

264 [Debra is smiling]

265 Jess: And it's *not funny!*

266 [marker in face again]

267 Debra: Well you got to be in. . .

268 you got to be in the Nutcracker

269 and I didn't even get a chance so

270 I could talk about it

271 and my. . .

272 with my mom

273 when you're over too.

274 Cindy: *Not nice*!

275 Jess: It's not nice because. . .

276 because what if. . .

277 Cindy [interrupting]:

278 Next year *you're* gonna be in the Nutcracker and maybe we won't,

279 right?

280 Jess: Right.

.....

Topic Unit #3

281 Cindy: and we really like it.

282 [Jess nods]

283 Jess: I kept prancing all the time.

284 Peter [not looking up from his work]:

285 I *might* be a reindeer,

286 I'm not sure.

287 Ruth [speaking at the same time as Peter]:

288 I don't wanna be a reindeer.

289 Jess [leaning over close to Peter and speaking in a low voice]:

290 You can't be. . .

291 you can't be six and be a reindeer.

292 Peter: What?

293 Jess: You can't be six and be a reindeer.

294 [Peter is older than the others in the class.]

295 Tisha: Yeah!

296 You can be a reindeer 'til you're eight.

297 Right?

298 [looking at Cindy]

299 You can be a reindeer 'til you're eight.

300 Cindy: No.

301 My sister's a (?)

302 and she was eight when she was a (?).

303 Ruth: You know what my friend,

304 um. . .

305 Debra. . .

306 [pointing to Debra] not you, but

307 she's seven and she's a. . .

308 she's a reindeer my friend Debra.

309 Not this Debra, but

310 she's seven she's a reindeer.

311 Jess: Yeah you can do that. . .

312 uh. . .uh. . .

313 but you have to be. . .

314 If you're seven you can be a reindeer if you're very short.

315 Peter: *I'm* tall.

316 Ruth: Well she's seven. . .

317 I *think* she's seven and. . .

318 a half.

319 Jess: Yeah but . . .

Topic Unit #4

320 Peter. . .

321 D'you wanna be my mom horse?

322 Peter: Sure.

323 Jess: Okay.

324 Peter: I'm gonna be a basketball player.

325 Jess: Yeah, so you can jump real high up.

326 [Peter shrugs.]

.....

Topic Unit #5

327 Jess: I like the story of Flubber.

328 Peter: What's Flubber?

329 Jess: Oh, it's a story where they put Flubber on your shoes and you
330 can jump real high.

331 Cindy: Oh I saw that story.

.....

Topic Unit #6

332 Jess: Who wants to be the baby horse?

333 Debra [very quickly, raising her hand]:

334 Mee.

335 Jess: You wanna be a *horse*?

336 Debra [nodding]: Yeah.

337 Jess: Thinking, winking. . .

338 Cindy: Can I be a horse?

339 Unicorn?

340 Debra: Yeah I wanna be a unicorn.

341 Jess: Only one unicorn in the story. . .

342 All right. . .

343 There's no small unicorns in my story

344 so who wants to be a big unicorn?

345 Debra [coming in quickly and raising hand]: Me!

346 [Debra looks at Cindy, pulls hand down]

347 Debra: Actually, I don't.

348 Jess: Who wants to be the biggest unicorn?

349 The biggest unicorn is about . . . four.

350 [Debra, Cindy, and Tisha all raise their hands simultaneously.]

351 Jess: Ohh.

352 I think Tisha does.

353 Debra: Yeah.

354 Jess: Because Tisha. . .

355 Tisha never gets to be in my stories,

356 right Tisha?

357 So Tisha is going to be the unicorn.

.....

Topic Unit #7

358 Debra: So how old will I be?

359 Jess: You'll be thirteen.

360 Debra: I'm not going to be thirteen.

361 Cindy: Can I be three?

362 Jess: Sure.

363 Debra: Can I be. . .

364 can I be. . .

365 can I be. . .

366 can I be five?

367 Jess: Nnnno!

368 Debra: Then I'm not gonna be in anything.

369 I don't wanna be in anything.

370 Well actually I changed my mind. . .

371 actually I changed my mind.

372 I don't wanna be in your play today.

373 Michelle: Debra can be whoever she wants to. . .

374 and however old she wants to

375 because she's the birthday girl.

376 Debra [glancing quickly up at Jess]: Yeah.

377 Jess: You can't always do anything you want
378 unless she's the birthday girl!

379 Michelle: But she *is* the birthday girl.

380 Jess: Yeah but it's not fair to other people. . .

381 they. . .

382 they want to be somebody. . .

383 and then the other person says, *No*

384 that's not very nice,

385 right, Cindy?

386 [looks to Cindy for reinforcement]

387 Cindy: Yeah.

388 Jess: Anyways, it's already hurting our feelings.

389 Michelle [interrupting Jess]:

390 Well, Debra's my friend.

391 Debra [looking down and drawing as she speaks]:

392 Okay I'll never. . .

393 Okay I won't be in your play.

394 [Jess stares out in front of her, as though thinking.

395 Jess: That's not very nice,

396 Cindy,

397 Is it?

398 [Cindy shakes head, no.]

399 [Interruption as Jill tells Debra to pick something of
400 hers up off the rug. This ends the issue.]

Transcript, April 2

Block 4

Topic Unit #1

394 [Jess stares out in front of her, as though thinking.

395 Jess: That's not very nice,

396 Cindy,

397 Is it?

398 [Cindy shakes head, no.]

399 [Interruption as Jill tells Debra to pick something of hers up off
400 the rug.

401 Jess watches and listens to the direction.]

402 Jess [turning to Debra]:

403 Debra!

404 Go put it in your cubby!

405 Debra: No,

406 she said, 'Not yet.'

407 [Jess looks at her a moment.]

408 Jess: No I heard her say in. . .

409 'bout one minute.

410 Debra: No.

411 [shakes head]

412 thirteen minutes.

413 Jess [jumping up]:

414 I'm gonna ask her.

415 [leaves]

416 [Jess returns]

417 Jess: She said in about ten minutes.

418 Debra: So I's right.

419 Jess: *You* said thirteen minutes.

420 Debra: Well I was right (inaudible)

.....

Topic Unit #2

421 [Jill interrupts Debra as she is mumbling to tell her she was
422 supposed to do the pick-up now.]

423 [Debra looks up at Jess as she starts to get out of her chair and
424 starts to say something to her, but Peter interrupts.]

425 Peter: What are you asking her to put in her cubby?

426 Jess: The little book things.

427 Debra: They're *not* book things,

428 Jess!

429 [leaves for rug area]

430 Peter [calling after her]:

431 What are they?

432 [Jess watches her as she goes to rug and picks up her 2 tubes of
433 Chapstick.]

434 Jess: The chapskinnnnn. . .

..... end of Topic Unit #1

435 [as she speaks, Debra returns to the table.]

436 The Chapstick on the special stone (?).

437 Debra [setting the tubes down on the table next to her]:

438 I'm gonna keep it with me.

439 Jess [speaking quickly / urgently]:

440 Don't show anybody else.

441 [Debra quickly grabs the tubes and puts them in her lap.]

442 Peter: I'm telling.

443 Jess [looking at him, indignant]:

444 It was our secret!
445 It was just *private.*
446 [Pauses, looks down, then up at Peter]
447 Anyways remember you had a private talk with,
448 with um. . .
449 Bert when
450 It was. . .
451 when you had a compliment. . .
452 and so. . .
453 and we had a compliment. . .
454 so. . .
455 Debra: Yeah we need to ta. . .
456 tell something and we couldn't say it out loud.
457 Peter [speaking to an adult in background?]:
458 Chapstick is still out.
459 [Debra looks up toward someone in background. Nothing happens.
460 Jess covers the two tubes with her hands.]

.....

Topic Unit #3

461 Jess: Don't show the purple stones or else the mummy will . . .
462 Debra: come!
463 [Jess pushes the tubes under the edge of Debra's paper.]
464 Jess: Yeah,
465 and Binky will be dead.
466 Debra: Yeah
467 and Tinky.
468 [Debra turns toward Ruth and they smile at each other.]
469 Jess: Yeah. . .

470		Binky and Tinky.
471	Debra:	They're our teddy bears.
472		When we give 'em a little kiss
473		they come alive.
474		Right?
475	Peter:	I don't believe you.
476	Ruth:	There's not a (?) thing (?)
477	Jess	[responding to Peter, interrupting Ruth]:
478		It is believe!
479		You can come over to Debra's house.
480	Debra:	Yeah um,
481		when they come over to my house they come alive
482		and so does Cindy.
483	Ruth	[shakes her head]:
484		Uh uh.
485	Debra:	Whoever comes. . .
486 487	Yeah because whoever comes over to my house gets to see Tinky and Dinky.	
488	Jess:	No (?).
489		Dinky is mine.
490	Debra:	Yeah and Tinky is mine,
491		but if they don't believe it they are alive teddy bears then they
492		u m
493		don't see 'em.
494	Peter:	I don't believe you.
495 496	[Peter's comment isn't heard by the girls and is interrupted by Jess's next comments.]	

497	Jess:	Mary's inside in a closet.
498		She's evil
499	Debra:	And. . . and. . . and. . .
500	Jess:	Mary's inside in a closet. . .
501		She's a little girl
502		and know what?
503		Mary was hurting Debra.
504	Ruth:	Why?
505	Debra:	Yeah and. . .
506		Betsy's. . .
507	Jess	[responding to Ruth]:
508		I don't know. . .
509		I don't know why. . .
510		She was just pulling her hair. . .
511		because she's only two.
512	Debra:	And you know. . .
513		and. . .
514		um. . .
515		you know who's in my closet?
516	Jess:	What?
517	Debra:	Betsy's (?)
518		And um she's
519		she's *so* mean to strangers.
520	Ruth:	You know who's in my closet?
521	Debra:	Who?
522	Ruth:	Um. . .
523	Jess:	You dressing up,
524		Ruth. . .

525 My. . .

526 your sister told me.

527 Ruth [shakes head slowly several times]:

528 Well you're dressing up.

529 Jess [loudly]:

530 I am not dressing up!

531 [Kelly, who has been sitting and writing quietly at a corner of the
532 able for awhile, interrupts and asks what their stories are about,
533 but Jess persists.]

534 Jess: I am not dressing up.

535 [Kelly tries to interrupt Jess's retort, but Jess finishes, facing
536 Ruth. and speaking with determination.]

537 Jess: She's invisible.

538 She's invisible to new people.

539 [Kelly asks her if she finished her story while she's saying this,
540 but Jess doesn't attend to her.]

541 Debra: And Betsy's invisible to new people, too.

542 [All three girls are ignoring Kelly's questions and seem to be
543 almost oblivious of her presence. They are too embedded in their
544 conversation to attend to her.]

545 Ruth: So is mine.

546 [Kelly finally addresses Jess by name, asking her what the title of
547 her story is. Then Jess stops the conversation and responds.]

APPENDIX C

DEFINITIONS OF CODING DESCRIPTORS

APPENDIX C

DEFINITIONS OF CODING DESCRIPTORS

KEY:
- \- = the first Message Unit of an illustrative sample.
- * = the Message Unit in the sample that would be coded under the function being described.
- [ ] = bracketed abbreviation following a descriptor indicates the way the descriptor is listed on the coding sheet.

Source

The Source is the name of the person from whom the verbal or non-verbal Message Unit originates. Only one dot is used in this section unless, on rare occasion, the Message Unit indicates that two or more students responded simultaneously.

Form

The Form is the discourse form in which the Message Unit is presented. There are five forms used in this analysis: Questions, Statements, Response +, Response-o, and Response -. Only one dot per Message Unit is put in this section. Questions take priority over Responses, and Responses take priority over Statements.

Question: A direct interrogative indicated either by grammatical structure or by a rise in pitch at the end of the utterance. When a question is also a response, it is coded only as a question.

- "Who wants to be the biggest unicorn?"
- "right, Tisha?"
- "Wonder who wants to be the prin . . .
  who wants to be the king?"

Statement: A declarative Message Unit in the form of a sentence, phrase, or word that is not a direct response to a comment made previously by another speaker.

- "Cindy,
  you're gonna be the tiniest,
  me and you . . ..
  all of us . . .."
  [four statements]
- "The biggest unicorn is about . . . four."
- "Ohhh." [said without connection to anything that has come before, as if to get attention, for example]

Response +: A clearly positive, affirmative, or supportive verbal or non-verbal response to another's utterance, even if framed as a negative, such as "No, that's okay."

- "Yeah" [in support of a decision, for example]
- "Ask another boy" [positive advice in response to a previous failure]
- "Yeah you're six" [complying with request]

Response-o: A neutral or emotionally indeterminate response that could be interpreted either positively or negatively by the listener. Can only be judged in relation to what has occurred previously. In the following sample, Debra's Message Units were coded as Response-o because in the context they neutralized an argument among several children.

- Jess: I saw you have two chances, Ruth.
  You had two chances.
- Debra: I guess . . .
  Yeah . . .
  You and you [indicating Cindy and Michelle] had none
  and the other three . . .
  those only got to have zero.
  And I feel sorry for you guys.

Response -: A negative response, sending a counter message, even if framed as an affirmative. Ignoring for purposes of shutting out or shutting off would count as well.

- "No, I *never* got a *chance* to be the tiniest."
- [contradicting another] "Yes you do . . . sometimes you do . . .]
- "I only had *one* chance!"
- "They had *no* chances."

Access: Access includes the functions involved in reaching out toward others in order to engage them in conversation, or to change the direction of the conversation or to close the discussion. It's possible to code a Message Unit twice in this section; 'Naming' can be coded together with any one of the other three categories. Many Message Units are not coded at all in this section.

Initiating: Opening a new topic after the previous one has been closed or after a period of silence, or trying to change the subject completely in the middle of a conversation. Judgement has to be context-based.

[New Topic]:

- "Ruth, do you want to be the baby in my story?"
- "Wonder who wants to be the princess."

[Complete change of topic while another going on]:

- Cindy: I wanna be the *baby* elephant.

  Debra: Yeah you're a baby elephant.

  Cindy: Okay.

  *Ruth [changing topic]: Now I'm gonna make you, Jess.

  Debra: Cindy, you're gonna be the tiniest. Me and you . . .. all of us . . ..

Transitioning: Using the previous topic as a take-off for a new direction in the conversation. In the first sample, below, Jess's last statement is a transition.

- Ruth [referring to plays enacted]: Over at my place, I always be the biggest.

  Peter: I always be the . . . I have never had a plays.

  Jess: I had a play . . .

  *I was a reindeer in the Nutcracker Suite.

  [This started a long conversation about the Nutcracker.]

Another sample shows Sam making a slight change in direction in the conversation.

- Jess: Sam d'you wanna be the king?

  Sam: Naw

  [Jess looks toward block area.]

  *Sam: Ask another boy.

  Jess: Hmmm. I think James. I'll go ask him.

  [Sam gets up and leaves table, as though to go ask James himself]

Naming: Addressing another person directly by name. Is not coded when only *referring* to another, even if s/he is present. When the name stands alone as a Message Unit, it is coded as a Statement *unless* it comes at the *end* of a question, in which case, if there is a rise in pitch (indicated by a question mark after the name) it is coded as a question. When a name is a single Message Unit, it is coded as "Holding the Floor" in the "Separateness" section, and "Process" in the "Writing" section.

- *"Sam

  d'you wanna be the king?"

- *"Ruth,

that's Debra.

That's me."

- *"Jess [coded as statement]

don't you like the baby?" [but this M.U. is coded as a question.]

Closing: The last Message Unit to finish a topic or sub-topic before another is initiated. Can often only be judged by analyzing what comes after because the intention or current context may infer that the conversation was ongoing, but subsequent events cut it off.

- Jess: James, at my show d'you wanna be king?

James: Okay.

*Jess: All right. [goes back to drawing] I'll draw you next.

Connectedness: Separateness and Connectedness are the categories that feed into the question of identity. Connectedness Message Units involve social functions that contribute to group cohesion, that involve giving of oneself to others, either through sharing, offering support, showing a desire to converse by initiating a conversation or throwing out ideas or information for others to respond to. A Message Unit is *usually* coded in one or two sub-categories in this section, but can be coded in up to four sub-categories. It is also possible that a Message Unit is not coded at all in the Connectedness section.

Inviting: Involves an invitation by the speaker to another that s/he be a character in her story, or otherwise participate in the speakers activities. Usually framed as a question, but occasionally, as in the first sample, it can be framed as a statement.

- "Wonder who wants to be the princess . . ."
- "At my show d'you wanna be the king?"
- "What age do you wanna be?"
- "Michelle, d'you wanna be the mom in my play?"

Offering or Supporting [Offrng/Suppt]: A show of solidarity, help with ideas, materials, spelling, etc., an offer of advice, suggesting an alternative choice or course of action. The sample, above, where Sam suggests Jess ask another boy is an example of support. Also, his non-verbal gesture of getting up to go and ask James for Jess was coded as support.

[offering a solution or an alternative, as in a negotiation situation.]:

- "How 'bout . . .?"

[Backing up a friend in an argument]:

- Jess Yeah but it's not fair to other people . . . they . . . they want to be somebody . . . and then the other person says, 'No,' that's not very nice, right, Cindy? [looks to Cindy for reinforcement.]

*Cindy: Yeah.

Critiquing: Giving either neutral, or positive, constructive feedback on another's work, ideas, or actions, including both how they could be improved or how they are admired or interpreted by the speaker.

- [Jess, looking at drawing of Ruth's]: "Awww, look at that dress!" [smiles at Ruth]

[Interpretation of a drawing]:

- Jess: Now what does that look like?

[both Debra and Ruth lean over to look at Jess's drawing]

*Debra: I don't know.

- "Nice."

Clarifying: Explaining further, elaborating upon, or confirming with an elaboration, something that has already been mentioned. Backing up a statement with further information. In the first sample, below, Debra's second series of Message Units are clarifications of what went before.

- Debra: Cindy, you're gonna be the tiniest. me and you . . . all of us . . ..

Jess: I wanna be the tiniest, too.

Ruth: Me too.

*Debra: Well Cindy never . . .

well, um . . .

*in that story you're gonna be the tiniest and Cindy never got to be the tiniest in my play.

- "Who wants to be the biggest unicorn?

*The biggest unicorn is about . . . four."

- Ruth: You mean . . . that's me?

*Jess: Uh huh. [Ruth is *asking* for clarification, so Jess's response constitutes clarification.]

Informing: Giving out unsolicited information about the work, ideas, or actions of the speaker or others.

- "I'm making Ruth with blonde hair."
- "Cindy, you have blue eyes so I need blue."
- "Now I'm gonna make me."
- "I'm gonna be the sister."
- "Nobody can be past seven . . .

  because I wanna be . . .

  I'm gonna be . . .

  Nobody can be past eight

  because I'm gonna be eight.

[five information Message Units]

Bestowing Status [Status Bestwl]: Endowment by an author of a characteristic or position upon a another person that carries status—either good or poor status. Usually involves the age of the character (younger being better, older being less desirable) or positioning with respect to the author's position in the story (for example, being positioned "in the middle" in terms of the age of the character in order to be next to the author, who is the youngest). Can also involve coloring or degree of beauty. For example, pink is a high status color, black is low. Message Units that *offer* or *invite* a status position are also coded as Status Bestowal as well as those where the position is *xz*.

- "Yeah you're six." [a good age position granted as a result of a discussion about who would take the younger positions.]
- Cindy: Can I be five? [asking for the youngest allowable spot.]

  *Debra: Yup.
- "You'll be thirteen." [a low status bestowal]
- Me and Jess are the prettiest

  because you have to be in black, Ruth."

  [two Message Units bestowing status, the first high, the second low]

Agreeing: Simple agreement with something already said. Usually a single affirmative utterance. If the form of agreement can be categorized as "Complying" or "Accepting an Offer" (both sub-categories of Agreeing), it is not coded as agreeing.

- "All right."
- "Okay."
- "Yeah."
- "Yes."

Complying: An author giving in to, or going along with, another person's desire or demand to be a character or hold a position in the author's story. Takes priority over Agreeing (see above).

- Cindy: Can I be three [in your story]?

  *Jess: Sure.

- "All right, you're the littlest." [referring to an earlier request, initially turned down, made by the other person to be 'the littlest' in the story]

Requesting: A question asking for support, advice, information, a position or characteristic in another's story. *Does not include invitations framed as questions* (e.g., "D'you wanna be the mom in my story?").

- "Can I be a horse?"
- "What's Flubber?"
- "right, Cindy?"

Accepting an Offer [Accptng Offer]: Agreeing to take the position in an author's story that has been offered or assigned. Takes priority over Agreeing (see above).

- Jess: Who wants to be the biggest unicorn?

The biggest unicorn is about . . . four."

*[Debra, Cindy, and Tisha all raise their hands simultaneously.]

- Jess: James, at my show d'you wanna be the king?

*James: Okay.

Separateness: Message Units that serve to pull the speaker away from the group or other individuals by distancing him or her through indications of a need to be independent, to show individual competence or even superiority, to position him/herself above or distinct from others as in issues of competence or in status roles, to take or establish ownership of his/her ideas or work, or to rebuff, regulate, or control another in

some way. Does not have to be an aggressively framed statement. Message Units are usually coded in one or two categories in this section, but can be coded in up to three or four. It is also possible for a Message Unit not to be coded in this section at all.

Deciding or Controlling Ideas or Work [Decidng/Cntrll]: Statements that claim ownership of work or ideas (often coded as "Statement" under Form and "Informing" under Connectedness or statements that indicate that a decision has been made, even if the decision is coded as complying with a demand. This category is only applicable when the author of the story under discussion is speaking *OR* the person who's name is being used in a story is controlling the use of her persona (see last sample).

- "Cindy, you're gonna be the tiniest."
- "Debra gets to be the littlest because she's the birthday girl."
- "The biggest unicorn is about . . . four."
- "I'm colorful

  but nobody else is."

[two Message Units Deciding/Controlling]

- "I'm not gonna be thirteen."

Evaluating or Judging Another's Work or Behavior [Eval/Jdgng]: A valuative statement that indicates the speaker is comparing the work, idea or behavior against a norm or higher ideal, or against perceived fact. The first sample, below, takes place in the midst of an argument involving the norm of turn-taking. The speaker is arguing to that norm. Because of the context, all six lines were coded as Evaluating or Judging.

- "Yes, you do . . .

  sometimes you do . . .

  and they have never . . .

  they only have one chance . . .

  you have about . . ..

  about *two*."
- "It's longer . . .

  your hair's not that long."

Holding the Floor [Holding Floor]: An utterance or partial phrase that isn't completed enough to determine how it connects with the overall direction or intention of the speaker's ongoing message. It is a way of showing the listeners that the speaker isn't finished speaking yet, or a way of giving him/herself think-time to find his/her meaning and articulate it the way s/he wants it to come out. Sometimes naming a person serves the function of holding the floor as well, when it is listed as a Message Unit by itself.

- "Well, um . . ."
- "I guess . . ..

  Yeah . . ."

  [two Message Units in succession, both holding the floor]

- "Ohhh."
- "Because Tisha . . ."

Imposing Ideas, Making Demands, or Directing Others [Imposng/Drctng]: Statements that tell the group or individual what s/he should be doing or thinking. Can be framed as friendly advice, or can be aggressively intoned or assertively presented. In either case, shows the speaker feels competent or confident enough to take leadership. In cases where a story is the topic, only coded when spoken by person who is NOT the author of the story under discussion. (those statements would be coded as "Deciding / Controlling," above.) That is, someone is telling the author what to do with her story. Includes all *unsolicited* Statements of a desire to be in someone else's story (e.g., "I wanna be the littlest in your story.").

[advice]:

- "You'll have to ask one of the boooyyyys."
- "Ask another boy."

[statement of a desire to be in story]:

- "I wanna be one of the fairies, too, Ruth."
- "I want my hair long [in your story].

  I'll tell you how long it should be."
- "Debra can be whoever she wants to . . .

  and however old she wants to

  because she's the birthday girl.'

[three Message Units imposing/directing]

Status Assumption [Status Assumptn]: The speaker takes on a status position or characteristic for herself in her story or a participant claims a status position or characteristic in another's story without being invited and without asking permission. A request to be in a status position does not constitute status assumption.

- "Because Jess and me already picked them [the status positions]."
- Ruth: You wanted to be the littlest.

  Jess: Yeah.

  *I'm one [years old].
- "I'm gonna be one and you're gonna be one."
- "I'm colorful, but nobody else is."

Refusal to Participate in Another's Story [Refsl to Prtcp]: Speaker turns down an offer to participate as a character in another's story.

- Jess: Sam d'you wanna be the king?

  *Sam: Naw.
- "Then I'm not gonna be anything.

  I don't wanna be in anything.

  Well actually I changed my mind . . .

  actually I changed my mind.

  I don't wanna be in your play today."

[five Message Units refusing to participate]

Criticizing: Speaker gives negative feedback to another about work or behavior.

- "Don't talk about (good?) things that other people will wanna come."
- "Don't be a brag about who's the littlest or who isn't or (?).

Denying: Speaker denies the assertions of another, or turns down a request by another.

- Ruth: *I never get to do, either.

  Jess: *Yes you do . . .

  *sometimes you do . . .

  and they have never . . .

  they only have one chance . . .

*you have about . . .

**two.*

- Less: Can I be four?

Debra: Uh . . .

*No.

Ignoring: A clearly deliberate refusal to attend or reply to another. Only coded when it seems clear to me as a form of non-verbal message. If the lack of reply seems due to concentration or other distractions, it is not coded as ignoring.

Change Functions [Chnge]

The two functions in this coding category relate to making changes in the writing or the social situation based on the social interactions that have taken place.

Negotiating: The use of bargaining or pleading by offering incentives or alternatives to get another to accept a position or characteristic, or to convince him/her to look at the situation differently. In the first sample, below, Jess wants Debra to adjust her decision about the position she will hold in Debra's story, so she offers possibilities.

- Debra: The next fairy is gonna be Jess. But there're no babies.

Jess: Awwww. I wanted to be a . . . Can I be a little sister?

Debra: Uh . . .. No.

*Jess: Can I be four?

six?

- "How 'bout . . .."

- "Please . . .."

- Ruth: Can I be in your play?

Debra: Yes, but you have to be the big sister if you want in the play.

Ruth: Whyyyyy?

Debra: Because Jess and me already picked them.

*Ruth: Then you hafta be three in my play.

[bargaining using her play against Debra's]

Revising: Changing a decision about the content of the writing based on the social interactions that have taken place.

- Ruth: Can I be seven?

Debra: Ruth, I don't think . . .

*Yes, you can . . .

*No! No!

How 'bout . . .

Cindy [interrupting Debra]:Can I be . . . can I be um . . . can I be five?

Debra: Yup.

*And Ruth, you can be five, too.

Ruth: 'kay.

*Debra: No,

*I mean Ruth has to be six.

Ties

Indicate whose text is being discussed by whom. For example, D—Tx—D means Debra is discussing her own text. R—Tx—D means Ruth is discussing Debra's text, etc.

Writing

These categories relate to aspects of the writing that were relevant to the overall focus of the study.

Content: The Message Unit relates to the content of the story: who's in it, the plot, the characteristics of the characters, etc.

Process: Message Units that relate to materials, procedures, rules of interaction related to the story construction or social interactions.

"est" Value: A particular characteristic of character construction relating to status involving the attachment of the comparative or superlative form to the designation of a character.

- "You wanted to be the littlest."
- "I wanna be the littlest in Jess's play about the puppies."
- "But I'm the prettiest."

Character Characteristics [Chr chrstcs]: Message Units in which the characteristics of characters are discussed, including all Message Units coded as "Status Bestowal," "Status Assumption," and the "'est' value."

- "I'm colorful . . ."
- "Cindy you have blue eyes . . ."

- "I'm making Ruth with blonde hair."
- "Am I old?"
- "How 'bout she's always in black,

  but she has . . .

  but she has the crown that's not black?"

Who Will Be Whom [Who-b-whom]: Message Units that indicate which participant is designated for a particular part, where there is emphasis on the person. However, when the emphasis is not on the person, but the characteristic, which is coded as Character Characteristics, it would not be coded in the Who-b-whom section. When there is a question about whether to code a Message Unit here, if the name or pronoun precedes the adjective, then it *can* be coded here (e.g., "Leila gets to be four"; "You're pink."), as well as under "Character Characteristics." If the characteristic precedes the name or pronoun (as in "What age do you wanna be?") then the Message Unit is not coded as Who-b-whom, only under "Character Characteristics." A response to an invitation to be included and the invitation itself are coded here.

- "I'm one." [*I* am the person who will be one. Also coded under Character Characteristics.]
- "Now I'm gonna make me." [Only coded under w-b-w]
- "There, that's Ruth and she's gonna be . . ." [the word "that's" refers to a picture of the Ruth-character]
- [looking down at her drawing]: "That's Cindy."

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